■ BUSINESS/B1
MVP named 'Management Man of the Year'

■ NEWS/A6
Romulo, chair of House committees probing 'Garci,' ousted

■ BUSINESS/B1
Hot money, OFW remittances lift peso to 6-month high of 54.30 to $1

■ ENTERTAINMENT
Pinoy animator at Disney brings lots of life to 'Chicken Little'

Not only is Garci back, he has written a book

By Philip C. Tubeza

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

NBI chief in 'deep coma' after suffering severe stroke

By Tina G. Santos

Thursday, November 24, 2005 ■ 36 pages | vol. 20 | no. 349

'Garci out next week'

Pichay also says he will seek custody of ex-election official

By Michael Lim Ubac

SOMEWHERE IN MINDANAO, former Election Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano is preparing for a public appearance "to clear my name," possibly next week, he reportedly said in a telephone call to Rep. Prospero Pichay.

"He's here," the Antipas del Sur congressman told the buzzing, "Well, all that is to be already talked me up."

Explaining the 60-year-old Garcillano's reluctance to come out this week, Pichay said he was "creating ripples ... testing the ground."

Garcillano confirmed that he was now in the country, said Pichay. He did not say where Garcillano was for security reasons when he talked to him early yesterday.

Although it remains to be seen whether he would finally put an end to lingering doubts about the legitimacy of the dubious presidency, Garcillano said he would definitely come out "to clear my name," Pichay said.

During any hitches, Garcillano will make his first public appearance early next week, Pichay said.

[illegible]

HEAD TURNING: COUNSELS at the Hall of Justice in Olongapo City for the preliminary investigation of the alleged rape of a 23-year-old Filipina by an US Marine. From left, lawyers Zenaida Ruth Andres, Marie Glenda Bacar and Christine Sevilla. At right, outside the hall, a Subic bar owner wears her purple rape-a-rama t-shirt to support the victim.

Subic rape case: Women lawyers vs all-male team

By Tonette Orejas and Norbert Joaquin
PDI Central Luzon Desk

OLONGAPO CITY—THE WOMEN who cried rape was absent, and so were the six American soldiers who were her alleged abusers.

But the court drama in the first rape complaint to threaten to put [illegible]

Lawyer Shirle Hindy Bacar told Olongapo City Prosecutor Fredericia Jalandoni that her client was not pressuring herself to "protect her privacy."

At least 94 local and foreign journalists had registered to cover the event.

Bacar said the woman's sworn statement had been submitted before Assistant Prosecutor Isidoro Bonifacio of Zambales.

Lanzanbay said in a press conference at the end of the hearing that the six soldiers' "physical presence" had not been required by the office of the city prosecutor.

He said that the six Marines "remained in US custody in the Philippines," and that no charges had been filed against them.

Jalandoni had earlier said he expected the soldiers to be pre-

Church to hold prayer meeting for GMA, foes

By Christian V. Esguerra

A PRE-CHRISTMAS GATHERing of key political personalities might just provide the needed push toward national reconciliation.

Church leaders and Catholic groups are seeking a concert between President Macapagal-Arroyo and her political foes during the annual Philippine National Prayer Breakfast set at the Manila Hotel on Dec. 7.

Included in the gathering were former Presidents Corazon Aquino and Fidel Ramos and Bishop Socrates Jose de Mesa.

Mr. Arroyo, founded by unresolved allegations of vote rigging and vote-buying, is expected to come face to face with some of her most active critics like Senators Aquilino Pimentel and Panfilo Lacson and Representatives Francis Escudero and Alan Peter Cayetano.

Aquino, erstwhile supporter of Mr. Arroyo, has been calling for her resignation following the release of the "Hello Garci" recordings. (For related story on Garci/Bunye, this page.)

[illegible]

Vatican slams doors on gay seminarians

VATICAN CITY—THE VATICAN says sexually active homosexuals and those who support "gay culture" are unwelcome in the priesthood unless the candidates have overcome homosexual tendencies for at least three years, according to Church documents passed Tuesday on the Internet by an Italian Catholic news agency.

The long-awaited document, a [illegible]

The document said that "the Church, while deeply respecting the people in question, cannot admit to the seminary and the sacred orders those who practice homosexuality, present deeply rooted homosexual tendencies or support so-called gay culture."

"These people find themselves, in fact, in a situation that presents a grave obstacle to a correct relationship with men and women. The correct ignore the negative consequences that can stem from the ordination to people with deeply rooted homosexual tendencies," it said.

"It cannot it is a case of homo-

LEYTE SHOOTING

Survivor: Soldiers kicked the wounded

By Fe Zamora
in Manila
and Joey A. Gabieta
PDI Visayas Bureau

A FARMER WHO SURVIVED THE Monday shooting at a village in Tabu, Leyte, yesterday said that soldiers had ordered grenades and continuously fired at him and his companions despite their shouts that they were unarmed civilians.

Nahael Margallo, chair of the Inter-Agrarian Farmers Multipurpose Cooperative, told the Citizens' Congress on Truth and Accountability (CCTA) that the soldiers kicked the wounded and hit with rifle butts those who tried to look at their attackers' faces.

Mr. Margallo was wounded in the right leg and hand.

Speaking in Filipino, Margallo said, "The soldiers also threatened to kill one of us if we did not surrender our firearms. When I heard that, I thought that if they threaten to kill me, I will accept my fate. We have no firearms to surrender."

[illegible]

'Taking care of kids starts with taking care of moms'

By Edmer C. Tatulos Jr.

ALARMED OVER THE HIGH MATernal death rate in the country, the United Nations Children's Fund (Unicef) is reminding the public that taking care of children begins with taking care of moms during pregnancy.

At an interfaith forum for children's rights the other day, Unicef said that for every 100,000 live births, at least 170 mothers had died because of complications and infections.

This mortality figure ranks among 16 countries in East Asia included in the study.

East Timor ranks first with 660 deaths for every 100,000 child births while South Korea has the least number of maternal deaths at 20.

"This high rate of maternal deaths pushes to because of the high functional literacy rate among Filipina women," said Nicholas Alipio, Unicef Philippine representative.

In his presentation in Muntinlupa City, Alipio defined ma-

THE SERENITY of town at the foot of the mystical Mt. Danaksa in Quezon province has been rudely interrupted by military operations, a consequence of a three-hour deadly encounter between government troops and MNLF guerrillas on Monday. The rebels retreated to the mountain, government troops are in hot pursuit, so villagers flee their homes.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 2005

WEATHER FORECAST

Second FRONTPAGE

2 solons want to fetch MJ from US

By John Liboy Jovellanos

AT LEAST TWO MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF representatives are seeking "custody" of ex-Manila Rep. Mark Jimenez from the United States amid reports his release from a federal prison and subsequent deportation to the Philippines had been delayed because of an "infraction" he allegedly committed while serving his 20-month jail term.

Jimenez, whose red mane is [illegible] Manila, has not yet been [illegible] Quezon City Rep. Jesse Robredo [illegible] Philippine Consulate in New York.

A family friend told the Inquirer that Jimenez's aides and relatives would be overjoyed on December, before his birthday on the 21st.

Another close Jimenez friend told the Inquirer that Manila Rep. Ace Hilon Jad, acting Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo requesting him to make arrangements with the US to turn over Jimenez to him, [illegible] for Rep. Prospero Pichay, ex-Bulacan Rep. Willie Villarama and Undersecretary Reynaldo Pesquera of the presidential Office of Coalition Affairs.

Pichay confirmed that the group "wants to go to the US to secure Jimenez from ill-advisories and to coax him back to the country. Pichay and Villarama were among those who accompanied Jimenez to the US when he was extradited in 2003.

"If there will be arrangements by IL, we want to get custody of him," Pichay told the Inquirer. "Romulo and his colleagues wouldn't release them would be no hitches in the arrangements for Jimenez's return.

Pichay said he didn't expect Jimenez, who was [illegible] throughout the flight during his extradition in December 2002, would be subjected to similar inconveniences on his return.

"That was a different era because he was not convicted yet but now he's a fresh man," Pichay said.

Presidential political adviser Gabriel Claudio said he saw no problem with the plans of the congressmen to fetch Jimenez and escort him back to the country.

"That's constitutionable on the part of Congress, especially his former colleagues," Claudio said. With a report from Erik Cortes

Magsaysay gets threats for fertilizer fund probe

By TJ Burgonio

WEEKS AFTER THE SENATE STARTED ITS INquiry into the alleged misuse of the Department of Agriculture's P728-million fertilizer fund, the lead prosecutor now the target of death threats.

Sen. Ramon Magsaysay Jr., chair of the committee on agriculture and food, said he and his chief of staff have been receiving nasty threats through SMS (short messaging system) after the committee opened its inquiry into the fund scandal.

Magsaysay, who released responsive press, has a couple of threats sent by text to his mobile phone on Tuesday night, won't be cowed into canceling today's hearing.

"I'm 67 years old. This is the first time this has happened in my life," he told reporters, but added: "It looks more serious to me. They don't know me. I'd like to see if they're [illegible] so-so life."

For its part, the senate disclosed the contents of the SMS messages which came in at past 9 p.m. Tuesday from 0915-8677904.

One read: "Isang bala lang [illegible] ulo mo, bullet is all we need to end your life!," while the other read: "Ingat sa mga ang ang [illegible] mga kung anong ayaw nyong mangyari sa inyong [illegible] pag-uwi [illegible] ng [illegible] ka."

Variations of a message

Magsaysay's chief of staff, lawyer Angelo Sumaya Jr., [illegible] received a variation of the second message around the same time Tuesday night.

"At first, I became afraid. But this went off. Two weekend security threats on my life," Sumaya said in an interview.

The senator theorized the threats came from sides of personalities, who were supposedly having a hand in the disbursement of the fund, widely believed to have been used to boost President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's [illegible] campaign in 2004.

"Since we're thoroughly scrutinizing the fund, a lot of people are feeling the heat. That's why they're threatening us. But we're not afraid because what's important is for the truth to come out," he said.

As scheduled, Magsaysay's committee will hold its fourth and final hearing on the fund controversy at 10 a.m. today.

"We are not deviating from our obligation," the senator said. "We have to set an example. The last thing we want is for some time it's a waste of taxpayers' money. If we [illegible], then it's never stop."

Magsaysay's disclosure of the threats came two days after he heard that Agriculture Undersecretary Belinda Inciong and Assistant Secretary Felix Alcantara tried to pressure him to go easy on the inquiry. Both officials denied this.

Magsaysay said that neither he nor his staff will be moved to have bodyguards in view of the threats.

'We walk alone'

"I won't go on having a bodyguard. It's not like a Magsaysay. We walk alone. Just as walking alone, the people are with us," he said. "My bodyguards are the Filipino people, who have suffered enough, and who have been duped and exploited."

Five witnesses are expected to appear at today's hearing to corroborate farmers' allegations that the fund was illegally utilized, two witnesses would testify on the March 24, 2005 murder of journalist Gerardo Espinosa, who exposed fertilizer fund irregularities, in Koronadal.

"My friend, a Palawenyo that farmers' journalist, may have stepped on some toes, but they have dirty feet. The documents she left [illegible] people are very revealing," Magsaysay quoted the witness as telling him. He, however, did not identify the witness.

The committee also received sworn subpoenas on Arroyo "fixer-for" Bolante, former agriculture undersecretary and now Rotary International director and treasurer, who has enabled the committee's three-hour hop.

Bolante is being sought for the commission for his key role in the release of the fund.

Erap defense team mocking proceedings, prosecutors claim

By Nelson F. Flores

SPECIAL PROSECUTOR JOSEL Villa-Ignacio yesterday accused the lawyers of former President Joseph Estrada of mocking the judicial proceedings at the Sandiganbayan after the defense failed to present witnesses yet again in the plunder trial of the deposed leader.

In a press conference after yesterday's hearing, Villa-Ignacio said the defense panel's continued failure to present credible witnesses and submit the names of new prospective witnesses were "a mockery of our proceedings."

He said the Special Division should issue an admonition and demand that the defense panel comply with the court's orders calling on it to file either presidential witnesses and a new dates for their presentation.

By contrast, he noted that when the prosecution was presenting its own witnesses, the court had been strict that it led toward an agreed time frame.

Villa-Ignacio said the prosecution panel was compiling a list of witnesses who were subpoenaed by the defense but whose testimonies were dispensed with after defense lawyers "hurriedly learned that the testimonies of these witnesses have no bearing on Estrada's plunder case."

He said that since the defense panel has apparently exhausted all possible witnesses, it should now put Estrada on the witness stand.

"They have been going on like this for months now. They have presented everybody, from book authors, journalists, doctors and policemen except Estrada," said Villa-Ignacio.

Meanwhile, Sandiganbayan lawyers decided to dispense with the testimonies of journalist Geneva Eubelog, janitor Andres Serrano, Barangay Tisoria and Bidoc Chief Supt. Edgardo Doromal, who were all already in court, saying their testimonies were "not necessary."

Defense lawyer Jose Flaminiano warned Villa-Ignacio against making sweeping statements that he said would portray the Sandiganbayan justices in a bad light.

'Arrovo' notes worth a fortune later – FVR

DON'T BELITTLE THOSE "PRESIDENT Arroyo" bills. They could be worth a fortune in the future, according to former President Ramos.

Ramos, who arrived from China on Tuesday night, was obviously amused by the mistake made with the P500 bank note that misspelled President Macapagal-Arroyo's surname as "Arroyo."

"My advice is, go after those mistakenly printed peso notes. I'm going to go and get one because they would be of great value in a very short while," Ramos said at a press conference on his arrival at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport.

"Do you know where I can get them?" said the laughing Ramos, who is a collector of gold coins and books.

The former President said he also collected stamps when he was young but he decided to give away his stamp collection when he went to college because it was quite a tedious hobby.

Ramos said that one of the most valuable Philippine stamps was one that was also a mistake.

He recalled that a stamp issued by the 1935 Commonwealth government identified a sawmill as the Pagsanjan mills when it was in fact a watermill in the Chalbud Basins.

That particular stamp cost 16 centavos but Ramos said he was certain it was now worth much more than that.

"That's what you call an error in stamp collection or philately. It's in the stamp catalogue," he said.

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas has apologized for the mistake in the printing of the P500 bank note that had misspelled the President's last name. It, meanwhile, withheld issuance of the bank note.

The BSP said the printing of the bank note had been out-sourced to a foreign supplier to ensure a sufficient supply of P500 bills during the Christmas season.

Nikko Dizon

Gov't forms panel to probe mine spills

THE GOVERNMENT HAS FORMED AN INDEpendent team of experts to investigate the operations of the P1.4-billion Rapu-Rapu polymetallic mine project in Albay following the occurrences of two mining waste spills that have sparked calls for the mine's closure.

Composed of engineers and academics, the team will be conducting its own inquiry into the cause of the mine spills and check on the mining operations of Lafayette Phil. Inc., an Australian-based company engaged in the mining of copper, zinc, gold and silver in Rapu-Rapu, off the Pacific coast of Albay province.

Church and civic leaders in Albay have called for the closure of Lafayette's Rapu-Rapu mine after only four months of operations, following claims by environmental groups that wastes from the mine's tailings pond had leaked cyanide into the island's creeks, rivers and coast resulting in the deaths of fishes.

The independent audit team, as the Mines and Geosciences Bureau calls it, should be able to settle questions about the "credibility" of reports that have been coming out on the mine spills, said Reynaldo Juan, the MGB regional director for Bicol.

"It will be an operations audit, a systems review," Juan said in a phone interview.

"There will be an evaluation of their (Lafayette's) mitigation measures that have been implemented and what will be implemented. The team will also review the economics on file," he said.

Probing Lafayette

The investigating team is composed of Dr. Carlos Primo David of the UP National Institute for Geological Sciences, engineers Joji Bacuno of the Chamber of Mines' committee on environment, Mars Bolalin of Benguet Corp., and John Fronda of the Professional Regulations Commission's board of examiners for metallurgical engineering.

Juan, who will meet with the team today, said the investigation would look into all aspects of Lafayette's operations, from extraction to milling to disposal of mine tailings.

Environmental groups have claimed that following their joint fact-finding missions to the island, it was found that the Oct. 31 mine spill was no accident. They said that Lafayette had deliberately channeled the mine's waste water to a creek that flows out to the Pacific Ocean.

According to a report by the Environmental Management Bureau which investigated the claims, Lafayette had made an opening in the upper tailings dam to allow the waste water to flow into the lower tailings pond so the dam could no longer hold the waste water.

The EMB report said, however, that the overflow to the creek, which caused the "bulk kills," was not intentional.

The water was meant to be contained in the "tailings ponds" where it would have been treated but the ponds overflowed because of heavy rains, it said.

Juan said the findings of the independent audit team would be made public and taken into account when the government decides the fate of Lafayette's operations, which have been stopped indefinitely. Blanche S. Rivera

New PMAP officers

LAWYER EMERICO O. DE GUZMAN WAS elected president of the Personnel Management Association of the Philippines in elections held yesterday.

Also elected were Rodolfo H. Cruzabra (Steelcase), vice president; Bernadette M. Guzman (Manila Bulletin), secretary; and Rolando Lorenzo E. Contreras (Promerge, Inc.), treasurer.

The six elected to the board of directors are Fe Corazon B. Ramirez (Rizal Dr. Luke's Medical Center), Ruben A. Sapinoso (Manila Electric Company), Arturo S. Tayco (Philsteel Resources Corp.), Rodolfo C. Alfonso (ING Bank N.V., Inc.) who will serve for two years. Victoria E. de la Cruz and Annie Frances H. Sabanpilo (PDI) will serve for one year.

PMAP is celebrating its 30th anniversary this year. It is the premiere association of human resources and human resource management practitioners. This year's elections were supervised by former PMAP presidents Pilar Ahrens, assisted by Rafael Herbosa and Maribel Umali.

Correction

IN YESTERDAY'S ISSUE, a front page story—"6th nomination for 74-year-old Bro"—misspelled the first name of the lead architect in the 1976 renovation of the Metropolitan Theater. The correct spelling of the architect's name is Otilio...not Ottilo...Arellano. The same error appeared in the front page story—"Grand Dame ready for another facelift"—in the Nov. 12 issue.

* * *

Readers may send their requests for correction of factual errors in writing to the Inquirer, Philippine Daily Inquirer Old Building, 7 Chino Roces Avenue corner Marconi Street, Makati City, fax No. 892-67-20/636, e-mail address: phdailyinq@pdi.com.ph.

Complaints about lack of courtesy or objectivity may be sent to Letty Jimena Ong, ombudsman, e-mail address: ombudsman@inquirer.com.ph or fax No. 897-47-03/96, Atty. Froilan Abesamis. Her phone number is 897-0000 local 462.

House bent on Con-Ass

By Philip C. Tubeza

THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES Wednesday set aside last night on a resolution calling for a joint meeting of both houses of Congress to propose changes to the 1987 Constitution, the chair of the House committee on constitutional amendments said yesterday.

Cagayan de Oro Rep. Constantino Jaraula said he supports the House's move for resolution even if at least 15 congressmen had signified their intention to independent bills on plenary deliberations under separate votes on the constitution.

"My object [is] that we will vote on [the] resolution. While there are 18 members lined up to interpellate, I suspect less than half of them to do so since by that time, many questions would already be unnecessary," he said.

Biazon earlier expected the resolution to be sent to the Senate next week so that the senators would join congressmen in proposing changes to the Constitution, particularly amendments allowing for a shift to federal parliamentary system of government.

Despite strong opposition from senators to convene the two houses of Congress into a constituent assembly, Jaraula said some senators had already assured him that the resolution would get a "very friendly" reception in the Senate.

"The Lower house from our friends in the Senate is they will treat this as a very friendly bill favoring that. In fact, 11 [the Consolidation Committee] Caucus] would already come out with its report," Jaraula said.

President Macapagal-Arroyo wanted the Congress to study amendments early Quarter.

"It will not be advisable to file part of session to ignore this because they will be isolated, precisely making them isolated irrelevant if they continue to fill their opposition," Jaraula said.

"Reasons many of them, in private, are in favor of [Cha-cha]," he added.

He denied accusations that the House leadership was railroading the approval of the resolution.

Still grounded

THE U.S. AIR FORCE'S F-16 FIGHTER JETS MISSED by a private hangar at the Mactan-Cebu International Airport (MCIA) yesterday while awaiting the arrival of 2,000 spectators called to fill a field today problems in one of the planes that forced both aircraft to make an emergency landing here last Tuesday.

Colonel "Bing" Tello, U.S. military spokesperson for operations of the Manila International Airport Authority, said in a phone interview that the jets might take off for their home base in Singapore today. He explained that the technicians would be arriving from the Misawa Air Base in Japan, where the F-16 fighters are and their pilots are based.

One of the planes encountered problems in its hydraulic system while en route to Japan from Singapore and its pilot, Capt. Attila Tegzes, requested permission for both aircraft to land in the Philippines.

SONY
like.no.other
Introducing the New GRAND WEGA
High detail, excellent sound, exceptionally REAL
GRAND WEGA
Enjoy one feature...
MegaPixel H-LCD
www.sony.com.ph
Sony Christmas Treasures 2005
Hurry!!! Grab unbeatable offers & promos this season only from Sony!
FREE
878-7800
www.sonycom.ph!

'Garci' return alarms businessmen

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

HINT OF FORMER ELECTION Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano's return to the Philippines yesterday sent jitters among businessmen and money managers.

But their mood remained generally upbeat. They expressed the economic and financial markets would ride any political storm as long as the government moves he would still let Bush reelected.

Former Philippine ambassador to China Alan Peter Cayetano said: "We have to watch out what he or his wife will say. The last time the market was about to take off, it was derailed by the Hello Garci tapes. The rally was postponed by five months."

Still bullish

Jy noted that the market's performance was only by the country's investors' continued bullish for the long term as long as the government stayed on track of its fiscal reforms, specifically its commitment to increase the value-added tax rate from 10 percent to 12 percent by next February.

Cayetano was also aware of the leading foreign brokerage firms considered the Garcillano more a "more short-term bump" and a reason to take profits from the past few days' steady gains. (The Philstocks fell a little over one percent or 17.19 points to close at 2,310.79).

He said the only concern for investors was what the Garcillano's return could have on the Palace itself and how this will affect the opposition.

Abby Rep. Joey Salceda said that if ever Garcillano would appear a new wave of political turmoil "it will have little damage on the economy and investor confidence."

No match to OFW money

"This episode will hardly affect the peso, the Phstks, treasury bills, or economic growth. Garci is no match to OFW remittances," said Salceda, an Arroyo economic ally. He referred to the robust jump in dollar inflows from overseas Filipino workers that have single-handedly kept the country's economy afloat despite the oil price spike.

The peso continued to climb yesterday as it remained Asia's best performing currency driven by steady OFW remittances and expectations of export earnings upon the recovery of the country's improving fiscal picture. (Story in Business section.)

French Chua, president of the Federation of Filipino Chinese Chambers of Commerce, said that while Chua might be a known jerk, adverse reaction to the latest episode in the Garcillano saga, the economy and the markets would continue to remain stable because of vastly improved fundamentals from months ago.

Jesamil Ese, president of the Philippine Chamber of Commerce Inc., said that while Garcillano's return would "surely have an effect," he welcomed this development because it could finally put an end to the political circus.

PEP upgrade

T hope it can be resolved quickly and provide a closure on this episode," Ese said.

President Macapagal-Arroyo ignored worries of another wave of political turmoil as she traded the Intercontinental Manila for Pasig's new upscale Shangri-La The Philippines' growth projection to 6 percent this year from its original forecast of 4.75 percent.

"The IMF forecast foretells a story of confidence ... that this is only part of the 'cultural feats' of a the Philippines' economy. We have to plan and be tough, because no problem implementation, we formed the political turmoil and opened the gates for surging confidence," Ms Arroyo said.

Garci out next week, says Pichay who wants him under his custody

Front page A2

man at the center of the political storm hobbling President Macapagal-Arroyo was also considering the possibility of being placed under the congressional custody.

Pichay, he will be surfacing. There are indications that he will come out and clear his name. If by chance he will still not, I will tell the House leadership that can be put under my custody so that the latest scandal will have no effect on him," said Pichay.

Arrest

Asked whether Garcillano's return was a sign managed by Malacañang as claimed by Sen. Panfilo Lacson, Pichay said: "If the opposition has nothing to hide, then they should not be worried of what they're saying now."

Speaker Jose de Venecia denied the arrest warrant on Aug. 3 to force Garcillano to attend a joint hearing of the House committees on suppression and the House committees.

Agusan del Sur Rep. Rodolfo Gregorio "Plaza told the House Tuesday that Garcillano returned in court in a few weeks ago and was sighted in Mindanao.

Tagbilaran de Dios Rep. Eva Gonzalez Jarada yesterday confirmed that Garcillano was spotted in his district but did not elaborate. He claimed that Garcillano was spotting a book on his saga in an election official. (See related story on Page A2.)

Garcillano vanished from public sight in June following the release of wiretapped conversations purportedly between him and Mr Arroyo at the height of canvassing of votes last year.

Ms Arroyo apologized for talking with an election official but insisted only opposition allegations she rigged last year's presidential election. In September, the 59-year-old President accepted an impeachment attempt in the House.

The Singapore foreign ministry said Garcillano flew in Singapore on July 14 from Manila, but that it did not know where he proceeded from. The two countries reportedly do have gone to the United Kingdom, the United States, Israel and Argentina.

In an exclusive interview in early August, Garcillano admitted he have travelled with Ms Arroyo several times last year but denied any wrongdoing.

"I'm not stupid," said Garcillano, stressing it would be foolhardy to cry hallooing. "I did not do anything that destroyed the credibility of the Commission on Elections."

He later issued an affidavit which showed that he had also talked with several politicians from the opposition, including Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile and House Minority Leader Francis Escudero.

Palace transports return

After months of indifference to his whereabouts, Malacañang yesterday transposed the repatriation to of Garcillano.

Presidential Assistant to ousing Gina Lee the proper investigating authorities to the utmost possible time," Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said.

"He holds the key to finally

NBI chief in 'deep coma' as of press time

Front page A1

"We saw in a fully moved," said Ricardo Diaz, chief of the bureau's Internal Division, quoting those who attended the meeting.

"When he stood up to present reports to his colleagues, he suddenly collapsed," Diaz said.

Wycoco, 59, suffered a severe stroke caused by a ruptured blood vessel in the brain and slipped into a "deep coma," his doctors said last night.

"Prognosis is bad, but we are hopeful," Dr. Dante Morales, medical director and cardiologist of the Manila Doctors Hospital, said over the press conference.

Morales explained that the blood vessel leading to the patient's brain was blocked, causing it to burst.

He said Wycoco's operation was emergential. "He had it close to was born. Bleeding is extensive and the parts of his brain he blood flow, and circulation of the most affected," he added.

Next 24 hours critical

The next 24 hours will be critical, Morales said. The period will determine if Wycoco would be able to regain consciousness, breathe normally and recover cranial functions, such as speech, comprehension and locomotor skills, he said.

Wycoco was rushed to the hospital after he collapsed at around 10:50 a.m. yesterday. He had an heart beat and his blood pressure dropped, the doctors said.

"We had to revive him," said neurosurgeon Dr. Gerardo Lagunzad, "so from normal pulse rate, his blood pressure went down very unusual because there was no oxygen flowing through his brain. Longer than that would have irreversible damage to the brain."

Wycoco was brought to an emergency room on the ground floor of the hospital on United Nations Avenue, which is near the NBI compound on Taft Avenue, about an hour later, he was moved to the intensive care unit.

At 6:30 p.m., doctors had yet to see the patient's children on the condition of the NBI director. Wycoco's family, relatives, friends and NBI officials and employees swarmed into the hospital, but

Vatican closes doors . . .

Front page A1

sexual tendencies that are merely the expression of a transitory problem, for example as in the case of an unfinished adolescence, they must, however, have been clearly overcome by at least three years before ordination as a deacon."

The document, called an "Instruction," is only the paperwork, instructing bishops. It was signed by the pastor and secretary of the congregation, Archbishop Angelo Amato, by Pope Benedict XVI on Aug. 31.

The text, which marks an extreme to current priests, was objected inclined to people entering seminaries and preparing for ordination. It's little wonder, "Repugnant attitudes and tendencies" document regarding people with homosexual tendencies in view of their admission to the seminary and to sacred orders."

Bishops' preferences on active homosexuals becoming priests are not new.

A key 1961 Vatican document on selecting candidates for the priesthood, finds clear homosexuals should be barred.

'Grave sins'

The new document underlines that long-standing rules, Church teaching con- sider homosexual acts "grave sins" and also intrinsically immoral and contrary to natural law. Therefore, no one can ordained be approved."

The new abuse scandal among priests in the United States and elsewhere has led some people to call for new restrictions.

Estimates of the number of gay in U.S. seminaries and the priesthood range from 20 percent to 58 percent, according to a review of research by the Boston Globe.

Jason Berry, a former seminary rector and author of "The Changing Face of the Priesthood."

Psychologist Thomas Plante—who has evaluated priests for dioceses and religious orders—said the document would have an "enormous" ripple effect on the future. It's priesthood if the seminarians are finished.

Fabulous even if gay

"Sexual orientation is almost all the evaluations I've done over 15 years haven't really mentioned," he said. "How what's coming out of the bureau is that it matters to a big way. That's a real challenge for seminaries. Now there are many many many more gay men who are fabulous priests."

He questioned how seminary directors would apply the new regulations, and suggested that many gay men in "denial" and, don't self- policy. The candidates who say try to hide their sexual orientation, and Plante, who chairs the psychology department at Santa Clara University, celibate.

"Now, just to be it I find because in order to do a real evaluation, you need to have some understanding of their sexual history-or behavior, regardless of their orientation," he said.

The Vatican press office announced in November 2003, at the height of the priest sex scandal in the United States, that the Congregation for Catholic Education was drawing up guidelines for accepting candidates for the priesthood. But would address the question of whether gays should be barred. However, the document reportedly had been in the works well before then. ■

Remulla removed as committee chair

THE LEAD CHAIR OF THE House joint committees investigating the wiretapping controversy was removed from his post Wednesday night.

Deputy Speaker Rep. Agusto Syjuco's objection, she majority D. Oco to the House of Representatives succeeded in removing Cavite Rep. Gilbert Remulla as head of the House committee on public information Wednesday night.

House Majority Floor Leader Prospero Nograles named North Cotabato Rep. Jesus Sacdalan to the new committee chair.

Church to hold prayer meet for GMA, foes

Front page A2

Rainer and Ito Misericordia were believed to have helped save the arrows presidency in gestures for her resignation mentioned in July.

But the atmosphere would be neither confrontational nor politi- test when Ms Arroyo meets both her allies and foes, viewed separately or all three, Senate President Manuel Villar Jr. and House Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr. have been invited to join the event.

The event will instead seek "to touch the heart and minds of our national leaders for God and for the good of the Philippines" the evening" said former Rep. Jose Luis Yulo Jr., president of the Philippine Bible Society.

Organizers expect around 1,000 national leaders from the executive, legislative and judicial branches of government, including the police and the military, to take up arms for prayer breakfast.

Transforming the nation

Archbishop Angel Lagdameo, president-elect of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP), will deliver the keynote speech on the theme "Transforming the Nation Through Servant Leadership."

Lagdameo earlier sought closure to the "Hello Garci" controversy, which reminded members of the CBCP, the failed impeachment of Ms Arroyo.

Villarin, along with his counterpart from the pro-Arroyo Iglesia ni Cristo, earlier appealed to opposed leaders to end their political bickering and rebuild their to focus on the plight of the poor.

It was thanks to the advice given by the CBCP in their pastoral letter drafted during its plenary assembly last July.

Among the breakfast, Cardinal said lobbied groupers would be most corresponding to specific themes such as reconciliation, justice, peace and repentance.

"It will not be presidential, non-partisan," Bagatao Dobdoba, the group's secretary, told the Inquirer yesterday.

Hyatt 10, too

All members of Congress had been invited, however members of the "Hyatt 10," the Cabinet officials who walked out on Ms Arroyo's address, are not on the who hosts the Jesus is Lord Movement.

Brave RP booters bow to Thais

By Cristhel Tupas
INQ Visayas Bureau

BACOLOD CITY—IT WAS A DEfeat that didn't put a dent in the Philippine team's morale.

The defeated Philippine men's football team came out fighting before crashing in powerhouse Thailand, 1-0, in its debut in the 23rd Southeast Asian Games before a huge audience at the Panaad Stadium last night.

Cleanly cut by a goal-post crowd of 25,000 fans, most of them wearing blue shirts, the Filipinos forced the Thais to toil for the victory. And even when the sports regional host's mighty gel the triumph, its results could not help but unravel at the large contingent of the Philippine squad.

"The Philippines played very very good game," said Chaiwat Buddaphet. "It could have gone either way but a mistake is mistake, unlike what the lucos made it."

Showing brilliant teamwork inside the box, the Thais scored the crucial point at 22-year-old midfielder Akkhrat Buddhasuk's heel. SP keeper Hikmat Canar, sticking the corners in the 76th minute, 12 yards out from the center off a pass from Suchet Pukmanit.

"It was just pure shot, plain and luck of connection on defense that allowed the winning goal," said SP coach Aris Caslib, whose team needs to sweep its remaining two matches to gain a semi-berth in Bacolod (continued).

The Thais also drew a superb performance from goalkeeper Hadi Tawankul, who made two crucial saves in the Filipinos' last shots effort to tie the match.

Tawankul survived an RP onslaught in the 74th minute, making flagrantly saves to the headers made by defender Ali Rivera and Efrel Villero all's corners.

The RP booters boasted by the arrival of foreign boosters, Inter Cambodia on Friday at 4:30 p.m.

The Philippines actually had the first scoring chance of the match in the fourth minute, but Oscal Gould's one-touch header from a corner from Bacolod few kicks sailed inches over the bar.

With the Filipinos getting more defensive minded, the Thais attacked without let-up from there until some few minutes later as Damnoen dashed over defenders only to see his left-foot strike hit the by bar. They had four more scoring chances in the first half and three combined passes later beat in the front of Bacolod's goal.

Pagulayan's new target: SEAG gold

BEIJING DAMGEMS ALEC PAGULAYAN HAS won numerous titles, including the 2004 World Pool Championship and last year's US Open, but he feels something is still lacking from his achievements in billiards.

The 27-year-old native of Cabugao, Ilocos, has yet to capture a Southeast Asian Games gold.

"I've added on my list of goals the gold medals in the SEA Games," said the 5-foot-3 Pagulayan, who's been ranked to spearhead the Philippine campaign once world pool icons Efren "Bata" Reyes and Francisco "Django" Bustamante.

Pagulayan will be using seven cues in the snooker doubles, snooker team, 9-ball pool singles, 9-ball singles and 9-ball doubles.

He will team up with Alvin Alci in the snooker doubles and with Alia Antonio Gonzales "Rodriguez" Andrion and Philipe Nuay in the team competition.

Dennis "Tampee" Orcollo will be Pagulayan's partner in the 9-ball doubles.

Ashley "Tuck" Paras, godfather of RP billiards, is optimistic that the Filipinos will dominate the event to be held in the Wukan Coliseum from Dec. 4.

"Our players have been performing well in local and international events," said Paras. "I am confident that we can win many gold medals."

Marlon Bernardino, Contributor

Boxers eye crown

BACOLOD CITY—READY TO DOUBLE.

Philippine boxing team coach Pit Gozar said this yesterday, two days before the RP pugs plunge into action at the University of the La Salla Coliseum here.

"The boxers are in peak form, they are ready to fight," Gozar said in Filipino.

The Philippines, which grabbed a single gold in 2003 courtesy of Harry Tanamor, is hoping to win the overall title, a feat it last achieved in Manila's Heyday ago.

Expected to win things around for the SP team are seven flagbearer pugilists—Jesse Tipon (featherweight), Rochelle Crabbe (light welter), Aramis Magbanua (welterweight), Angelo Lubos, Nestor Bahalao (lt), Mark Jason Melligen (welter) and female boxers Khaleel Mariano (light) who will be fighting in an international event for the last time in their previous.

Cristhel Tupas, INQ Visayas Bureau

TORCH RELAY: Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority officials led by chair Feliciano G. Salonga (3rd/R on right) and Administrator Armand C. Arreza (second right) along with Cambodia Gov. Victoria Ping (center) and Olongapo City Mayor James Gordon join Jennie Figueroa as she holds the symbolic SEA Games Torch that will light the urn at the Rizal Park during the Torch Relay ceremony in Subic Bay Freeport Zone. Subic Bay is the site of competitions in archery, triathlon, canoe/kayaking and sailing.

Three wise choices this Season.
Grab these fabulous phones FREE from Sun!
NOKIA 1600
FREE AT PLAN 250
SAMSUNG X640
FREE AT PLAN 600
SONY ERICSSON J210i
FREE AT PLAN 350
Check out our other cool handsets!
sun CELLULAR

The WORLD

Lito Lorenzo B. Gutoc

It's official: Merkel takes power in Germany

BERLIN—ANGELA MERKEL MADE history Tuesday as the new elected German chancellor, becoming the first woman to take the reins of Europe's biggest economic power and the first leader from the former communist east.

She received an overwhelming majority—397 of the 611 valid ballots—to a vote in the Bundestag lower house of parliament, making her Germany's eighth postwar leader.

The vote came two months after her Christian Democrat (CDU) narrowly won a general election against outgoing leader Gerhard Schroeder's Social Democrats (SPD), who moved his arena years in a coalition with the Greens.

"Dear Dr. Merkel, you are the first democratically elected female head of government in Germany. You sends a strong message to many women, and surely some men as well," parliamentary speaker Norbert Lammert said of daughter.

Johnsonian, 51, was the first

MERKEL

to shake her hand.

The 10-year-old Merkel, who is also Germany's youngest postwar leader, cracked a small smile as the results were announced and appeared to fight back tears as the deputies applauded her.

"I take you much luck, strength and God's blessing," President Horst Koehler said.

The conservative faces a daunting task, particularly as she has been forced to head up an unwieldy left-right "grand coalition" with her political rivals.

The near-vulgar election result underlined Germans' rejection of her more radical economic reform plans in favor of one loosened with the SPD's traditional leftist policies on the labor market and the welfare system.

"I am firmly convinced that we will together be successful in reforming and further developing our social welfare state so that it can also be a source of strength for our society and our economy in the future," SDG leader Matthias Platzeck said, congratulating Merkel.

Merkel became a goal of winning Germany to the top three countries in Europe by reducing growth within 10 years and slashing the 11-percent unemployment rate during her four-year term.

A self-effacing pastor's daughter who broke the chastene and sexist mold of Germany's male-dominated Christian Democratic Union Party headed by Chancellor Helmut Kohl, Merkel is often compared to Britain's Margaret Thatcher. AFP

White House dismisses Jazeera bomb plot report

WASHINGTON—THE WHITE HOUSE ON TUESDAY DISMISSED as "outlandish" a report that President George W. Bush had wanted to bomb the Arab television news network Al-Jazeera.

The Daily Mirror tabloid published what it called a "top-secret" government memorandum which said British Prime Minister Tony Blair had talked Bush out of launching a military strike on the station.

"We are not going to dignify something so outlandish and inaccurate with a response," White House spokesperson Scott McClellan said of the British report.

White House communications director Nicolle Wallace had earlier called the report "fanciful."

"We're not going to talk about private discussions that take place between the president and other leaders," Wallace said on BBC television.

"But it's fanciful to think that the president of the United States of America, a champion really for free press all over the world, would ever have any serious consideration to do anything of the sort."

Al-Jazeera has drawn fierce criticism from the US administration, particularly since the imprisonment of Iraq in March 2003.

The Daily Mirror published a five-page transcript of a conversation between Bush and Blair during the prime minister's April 2004 visit to Washington which indicated Bush wanted to attack the station's Doha headquarters.

The Mirror quoted one unnamed British government official as saying Bush's threat was "humorous, not serious." However, another source said: "Bush was deadly serious, as was Blair. That month is absolutely clear from the language used by both men."

In Alexandria, Virginia, AFP's two-word policy on Tuesday of conspiring with and aiding al-Qaida and planning assassination Bush.

A 12-member federal jury at the US District Court found Ahmed Abu Ali, 24, guilty of all charges in a nine-count indictment. He had been charged with conspiring to support and supporting al-Qaida, conspiracy to kill Bush and conspiracy to commit aircraft hijacking.

US District Judge Ronald Whyte Lee set a Feb. 17, 2006, date to sentence Abu Ali, who faces life in prison.

Abu Ali was arrested in June 2003 while studying medicine in a Saudi university. He signed confessions and made statements admitting to the plot against Bush and to having ties to an al-Qaeda cell.

He was held in Saudi Arabia for 20 months before being turned back to the United States earlier this year to face trial.

At the statements, Abu Ali said he and some members of an al-Qaida cell in Medina, Saudi Arabia, discussed how he could kill Bush. He said they also talked about other types of attacks, including traps. He also said he knew that could be carried out in the United States.

Prosecutors said Abu Ali's goal was to become a pioneer of terrorist operations like Mohamed Atta—believed to be the ringleader of the Sept. 11 hijackers. AFP, Reuters

RARE DIANA PHOTOS

Celebrity photographer Mario Testino poses in front of a photograph of the late British Princess Diana at the Kensington Palace in London. —AFP

Poll boost for Sharon after quitting party

JERUSALEM—POLL ON TUESday predicted Ariel Sharon's re-election as Israeli premier, vindicating his gamble to create a new Mideast party in a move that has raised hope of a breakthrough in the peace process.

As President Moshe Katsav gave the green light for a fifth election, Sharon's former colleagues eyed the leadership of the Likud party after Likud party, dung-ass crisis by the seismic shift in Israeli politics.

A series of surveys taken after Sharon unveiled his new party showed that the Likud bottom by around seven to 10 seats opponents have relished meltdown.

The new Sharon-led Kadima (Forward) party would win between 30 and 33 seats in the 120-strong parliament, the polls showed, each dealt between 12 and 15 seats — a dramatic drop from its current 40 seats for Likud.

The surveys also predicted that the left-of-center Labour would secure 20 seats, both a result would mark something of a recovery for the party, which earlier this month elected trade union chief Amir Peretz as leader and secured only 16 seats at the last election in 2003.

"All the parties that I have consulted are in favor of early elections which should now take place," Peretz told journalists, adding that he hoped to set a date in the next few days after consultations with Knesset leaders. AFP

Tummy bugs can become photographic films

PARIS—BIOLOGISTS SAY they have created a "living photographic film," made out of engineered intestinal bacteria, that is capable of taking high-resolution black-and-white pictures.

In a study published on Thursday in Nature, the weekly British science weekly a team led by Christopher Voigt at the University of California at San Francisco started by constructing a light-sensing gene from a gene called a cinesin in bacterial cells—at up to 100 million pixels per 2.5 sq. cm.—the resolution and tones were as vivid as those by good.

The authors say their invention could spur "bacterial photography" and open the door to a series of new materials made from living organisms.

But it could also help unlock fundamental knowledge about how bacteria use gene networks to send signals to each other. AFP

ILLUSTRATION ROBERT A. ROSENBERG

Ukraine marks 'orange revolution'

KIEV—SNOW FLOATED DOWN ON A SEA of orange flags and orange-clad crowds in Kiev's Independence Square on Tuesday, prompting memories of events a year ago, as Ukraine celebrated the first anniversary of the "orange revolution."

By evening, tens of thousands of people filled the square that was the epicenter of last year's protests, when President Viktor Yushchenko was due to address the nation in a televised speech later in the night.

Many had come from outside Kiev, to return to the square where they camped last year during the 17 days of massive demonstrations that led to the fall of an entrenched pro-Russian regime in favor of a pro-Western reformer.

"I came to support the president," said Dmytro Bybalo, a 45-year-old teacher from the western city of Ternopil who took an overnight train into the capital with 15 friends and raised the scene on a hand-held video recorder.

When asked whether, as many revolution supporters, he was disappointed with Yushchenko because of the slow pace of reforms and a number of scandals that have hit his administration, Bybalo said: "Not even a little bit."

"A year is too short a period of time" Yushchenko to change things, he said.

Supporters began pouring into central Kiev early in the morning. Some brought orange packed lunches. Many had arrived from last year's protests, while others swapped the orange flags and bandanas handed out by Yushchenko's Our Ukraine party from years throughout the square.

It is hard to measure the atmosphere of last year's protests, when hundreds of Yushchenko backers occupied the streets to support his claims that the former regime had rigged a presidential election, organizers set up a handful of tents in the square and handed out hot tea and coffee.

"This is a holiday for me," said Nina Rudnitsa, a 56-year-old from the northern city of Sumy, who attended last year's protests with her daughter.

"I am living as I was a year ago, but it's up to me to improve my life," she said. "Yushchenko is a good person. I hope God brings him good health so he continues to work."

Just as last year, where Ukraine's leading musicians entertained the crowds during the protests, performances were due to sing from a stage set up in the middle of the square late after noon on Tuesday.

While waiting for the acts, some groups of people danced to tunes from portable radios, while others performed Ukrainian folk songs.

Alexander Salmon, a 42-year-old sailor and fleet mariner, couldn't attend last year's protests, because he was away in Ghana working. AFP

WORLDBRIEFS

Suicide bomber kills 31 in Iraq

BAGHDAD—A suicide bomber struck a busy commercial street in Hilla, killing 31 dead, another 70 people were wounded, police said. The explosion occurred in the center of the city, officials said. Half the dead were police either rushed to the scene after gunmen killed a police officer, a security police Brig. Gen. Samad Qader. The blast was just the latest of many in Hilla, a mixed Shiite, Kurdish and Sunni city in an oil-producing region 100 km north of Baghdad which often has been a stronghold of Shiite militias. Reuters

Bird flu kills 160 swans in Russia

MOSCOW—Around 160 wild swans have died from bird flu in the past few weeks in the Volga River delta in southern Russia, Russian news agencies reported Tuesday. Russian officials said that the swans died from the H5N1 flu strain. The veterinary inspections in the area started on reaching the official RIA Novosti agency, Russia's deputy veterinary chief, Yevgeny Nikishkenov, told state-run Mir Tass that roughly 250 swans had died and that a quarantine was being enforced around the province the city of Astrakhan. Officials did not say whether it was suspected the flu could be the H5N1 strain, which can be transmitted to humans. AFP

US restores Indonesia military ties

JAKARTA—The United States restored military ties on Tuesday with Indonesia once a weapons embargo was lifted over concerns about human rights violations and impunity for human rights abuses, State Department officials said. "Indonesia is a voice of moderation in the Islamic world," State Department spokesperson Sean McCormack said in a statement announcing the decision. "Indonesia has made significant progress in advancing democratic institutions and practices in a relatively short time." The move comes despite objections from human rights groups that say Indonesia has done too little to punish those responsible for violence in East Timor in 1999, but US diplomats defended the decision, which coincides a series of steps this year toward closer military ties with the vast archipelago. Reuters

US forces wrap up offensive near Syria

BAGHDAD—US and Iraqi forces ended on Tuesday a major 11-day offensive against suspected al-Qaida operatives near the Syrian border, with 120 rebels killed and 1500 captured, the US military said. Two US soldiers were also killed in fighting during the operation known as Operation Steel Curtain, adding to a growing death toll which has seen 2,100 US military personnel lose their lives since the March 2003 US-led invasion. The military said the assault was aimed at preventing al-Qaida fighters operating in the Euphrates River Valley and throughout the border area from moving into Iraq's western provinces to join the Sunni insurgency. "The operation made way for the establishment of a permanent Iraqi army battalion headquarters in the Al Qaim region and reinforced efforts for local citizens to vote in the upcoming Dec. 15 elections," it said. AFP

Thomas keeps cool as Tigers end Express run

CECIL Mamiit works out for the first time with the RP team.

Inspired Mamiit promises gold

By Dennis G. Rivas
Sports Editor

TERENGGANU, MALAYSIA—Cecil Mamiit, the 2004 world number-one men's doubles player, is back in the world's top 10 and he's promising the Philippines a gold medal in the 25th Southeast Asian Games.

Mamiit, who ended last year as a three-time National Basketball Association champion, is ranked No. 9 in the world in men's doubles with partner Jeff Tarango of the United States.

Tarango ended 2006 ranked 11th in the world, one set to arrive last night.

Mamiit and Tarango have already shown enough form to win medals for the country. The pair won the men's doubles at the ATP tournament in Vietnam open recently.

Despite signs of fatigue, Mamiit feels that the competition format will work to his favor.

"There are a lot of matches to be played," said Mamiit. "I'm not too sure to get better to the finals on. That is additional setting. I think for guys to have fun."

After some woes in the ATP Tour, Mamiit's career earnings have reached about $900,000 (more than P50 million). With a report from Apollinario Magsaysay, contributor

Pinoys s

By Marc Anthony Reyes

LOS BAÑOS—EMPLOYING UNSPARING FIGHTING spirit, the Philippine water polo team demolished Thailand with a flurry of early goals to prevail, 10-3, last night and remain hopeful of a gold medal outlook in the 22nd Southeast Asian Games at the Unos Aquatics Center here.

Needing to win all their remaining matches after narrowly losing to superpower Singapore, 6-7, the other day, the Filipinos smoked the opposite mark...

INQUIRER Platinum Code

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER PLATINUM ANNIVERSARY

What do you call the festivities of wild animals?

Find the answer to the question in the highlighted letters above. Highlighted letters may be used more than once. Text to your answer to 2678* for SMART, Globe, and Sun Cellular subscribers and get a chance to win in the weekly or grand draws!

Prizes as stated.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

See print ads and flyers for complete details.

INQUIRER Platinum Code

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER PLATINUM ANNIVERSARY

CONGRATULATIONS!

Bella D. Nones of La Union
Benda Ty of Boracay
Rodolfo M. De Leon of Las Piñas

WIN P20,000 IN CASH!

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

See print ads and flyers for complete details.

INQUIRER Badminton

Served fresh, monthly.

Available at all major badminton courts nationwide.

InqBox

Questions of the Week

Do you think that the 6 US Marines accused of rape should remain in the Philippines?

Senders of short SMS texts as published in Tuesday's InqBox will each receive an "Inquirer Shirt"

Text to inquirer box name/age/city/message.

Text your answers to 2337 (Smart) or 333 (Smart) plus name at no extra charge.

Mobile Inbox answers can cost same as P10/SMS (incl. 20% VAT). Non-text answers, even inquirer ad campaign/qty/mailing address to 2337 or 333 as text counts and can be mailed to Text.

sink Thais, stay in hunt

PHILIPPINES' Kierpreet Sahrawat (3) and Pratthana Saengkaew apply the squeeze on the Philippines' Phil Younghusband.

RP lawn bowls, petanque teams out to impress

ANGELES CITY — The Philippine team in the Southeast Asian Games' lawn bowls and petanque competitions are confident of sweeping its eighth dozen of the 12 gold medals at stake in these sports.

Team captain Reina Jo Gimotea said that while the Philippine team expects stiff competition from Malaysia and Brunei, she believes that the Filipinos have a good chance at dominating the events.

"We have been doing well in the past two years, bringing home golds and silvers in various international tournaments," Gimotea said. "We have been improving our technique with constant practice, so now our records is very high."

Lawn bowls is a game that rivers in turn to 130-meter(s) England. It is played by two opposing teams, each trying to roll their "bowls" as close as possible to a smaller ball or "jack" over a grass surface. Petanque, on the other hand, is a French version of the game, but with smaller metal balls and played over gravel.

RP team captain Marsalyn Gimotea (right) discusses strategy with team members.

The two Philippine teams also hold a home court advantage because they have been practicing at the Hidden Valley Sports Club in Clarkmoville, Angeles City, which is also venues for the SEAG lawn bowls and petanque competitions slated Nov. 29 to Dec. 5.

Jun of the Clark Economic Zone, Hidden Valley Sports Club is the only major lawn bowls and petanque facility in the country and has even surpassed the facilities in most international competition standards.

Nat'l lady booters tackle Thais today

Home court advantage

SPECTATOR

Al S. Mendoza

MHDP shuttlers bag junior title

AFP open to truce with Reds

By Gemma Z. Pacolbagan

THE MILITARY IS OPEN TO A SUSPension of military operations (SOMO) during the Christmas holidays, Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Generoso Senga said yesterday.

But he said ongoing operations against New People's Army (NPA) rebels will continue in the meantime.

"I think it's possible," Senga replied when asked if the military would recommend a Christmas ceasefire this year.

"It's acceptable to suspend military offensive operations but it's too early [to decide]. It's only November, but usually it's done in deference to the Christmas season," he added.

He said a better idea gives soldiers on the battlefield more respite during Christmas.

"But you must make it clear it's a suspension of offensive military operations. We remain in the defensive stance because SOMO envisions also advantage of the situation. They use only attack our positions but also intensify their terrorist activities like extortion," he said.

Senga flatly rejected calls from some legislators to declare an early ceasefire with the communist rebels, which has stepped up its attacks on government forces.

Since Saturday, 12 soldiers have been killed and at least 30 rebels have been injured in two rebel ambushes in Calbiga, Samar and in Tinang, Quezon.

Some 700 families in Tinang and the nearby towns of Candelaria and Dolores have been forced to flee their homes due to the fighting.

"There's no plan for a ceasefire," Senga said.

He belied the claim of Commission Party of the Philippines spokesman Gregorio "Ka Roger" Rosal that the Quezon encounters were the result of the GPH-United Command's order to resurrect using to "unusually tactical offensives" against the Arroyo government.

"They did not start the offensive. The particular incidents in Calbiga and in Tinang took place as part of ongoing offensive operations of the Armed Forces. So it is a misperception that it is the AFP which who are on the offensive. Our operating troops are on the offensive," Senga insisted.

"We suffer casualties but they suffer casualties also. What is important is we are able to control the areas that they are pursuing," he said, citing the Globe Telecom offensives in Quezon province.

Since July 26 Globe cell sites around the country have been sabotaged by communist rebels, the latest being the one in Lucban, Quezon that was destroyed last Tuesday.

In a phone interview with reporters yesterday, Rosal said they are willing to declare a holiday ceasefire, but he said this could be scuttled by ongoing military offensives in Quezon.

"If the fighting continues there might be no ceasefire," he said.

"The lawmakers should direct their appeal to the government, not to us. They [military] should be the first to declare a ceasefire," he went on.

Troops, Abu Sayyaf trade heavy gunfire

TROOPS AND ABOUT 100 SUSpected Muslim militants exchanged heavy gunfire deep in the mountains of the southwestern island of Jolo, killing nine soldiers and an unknown number of rebels, the army said yesterday.

Brig. Gen. Alexander Abo, commander of the military's counter-terrorism task force and fighting broke out Monday when soldiers ran into a large group of Abu Sayyaf rebels in the mountains near Indanan town.

The clash was the first contact with the rebels since a week ago, when troops in Patikul town came under mortar barrages.

"We met with each [other] for hours [and] have inflicted a heavy toll on the enemy side," Abo told reporters. "Sporadic fighting continued through the night."

Abo said five soldiers had been killed and 25 wounded since Nov. 13, when troops hunting a one-armed, bomb-making Abu Sayyaf commander clashed with a group of rebels near Indanan town.

An estimated 20 rebels had been killed, but only three bodies were found at the scene. Nearly 5,000 residents of three villages around Indanan fled their homes and farms.

The military has been searching for Radullan Sahiron, the Abu Sayyaf chief on Jolo, after police apologized for arresting a man who turned out to be a look-alike wearing the wrong shirt.

Sahiron, with a bounty of US $5 million on his head, is wanted for a series of high-profile kidnappings, including the abduction of 21 tourists and resort workers from Sipadan island in Malaysia in 2000. Reuters

Coco biodiesel suppliers plan to raise output

By Blanche S. Rivera

THE PHILIPPINES' BIODIESEL PROVIDERS are all set to meet the projected demand of 70 million liters of coco biodiesel when Congress enacts a law mandating oil firms to add one percent of the biodiesel to fuel.

Chemrez Inc., one of three producers of coco biodiesel in the country, is expanding its plant in Quezon City to increase its production capacity from 50 million liters to 75 million liters of coco biodiesel a year.

"Our preference is to supply locally, but if there's no law to mandate the use of coco biodiesel, then we have to export," Chemrez operations manager Jun Ang Lao said yesterday.

He said Japan was an emerging market for coco biodiesel, along with South Korea. The company is also negotiating with the European market, where the use of alternative fuel or clean fuel is strongly backed by the government.

The European Union (EU) requires its 25 member states to use 2.75 percent of biodiesel in their fuel mixture, making the EU a ripe market for producers of alternative fuel.

The President has certified as urgent pending bills to both the Senate and House of Representatives mandating the use of clean additives to diesel and gasoline.

Malacañang has also issued memorandum circular 55 requiring government agencies and government-owned and controlled corporations to use one percent of coconut methyl ester in their diesel requirements.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Thursday, November 24, 2005
34th Week in Ordinary Time

1st Reading: Dn 6:12-28
Gospel: Luke 21:20-28

Jesus said to his disciples, "When you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then you must know that the time has come when it will be reduced to a wasteland. Then, if you are in Judea, flee to the mountains; if you are in the city, leave it; and let those who are in the field not return to the city.

"For those will be the days of its punishment and all that was announced in the Scriptures will be fulfilled. How hard will it be for pregnant women and for mothers with babies at the breast! For a great calamity will come upon the land, and divine justice upon this people. They will be put to death by the sword or taken as slaves to other nations; and Jerusalem will be trampled upon by the pagans until the times of the pagans is fulfilled.

"Then there will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and on the earth anguish of perplexed nations when they hear the roaring of the sea and its waves. People will faint with fear at the mere thought of what is to come upon the world, for the heavens and the universe will be shaken. And at this time they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.

"Now, when you see the first events, stand erect and lift up your heads, for your deliverance is drawing near."

Commentary:

This is the description of the destruction of Jerusalem, but it could be any landmark, any country as it falls from power, any nation brought to ruin by another nation and then made slaves to those who conquer. And it is harder for women, children and those about to give birth. And it is about the end of time, the end of all history and all world powers, at the end of the world when the Son of Man comes to judge the nations with justice. There will be justice and glory will touch the earth. This we end with wonder: "stand erect and lift up your heads, for your deliverance is drawing near!" The martyrs, the prophets, those who worked for justice, those who befriended the poor and were the friends of God—holiness will be given its master what transpires in the world today we are to stimulate the freedom of the children of God, promote resurrection conditions are ready; now, always, drawing nearer to us.

Christian Publications Inc., 4 Maysan St., 1910 San Antonio Village City, 1870 Mandaluyong City, Metro Manila, Philippines. Tel. 426-5966 Fax: 865-1630 E-mail: cpi@cbcp.org. Website: http://www.cbcp.org/cpi (Christian Publications Inc.). © http://www.cbcp.org/cpi (Christian Publications Inc.). All rights reserved. Unauthorized reproduction is prohibited.

DATE 11-24-2005 PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER VOL. XXVII, NO. 349

OPINION

Email us your feedback inquirer.opinion@inquirer.com.ph Homepage at http://opinion.inquirer.net

Publisher Isaac Tarnoo
Editor-in-Chief Letty Jimena Magsanoc
Managing Editor Jose Ma. D. Nolasco
Associate Editor Rolando O. Olandag
Business Editor for Marketing Ramon G. Gonzalez
News Editor Antonio T. Diaz Jr. • Chief News Desk Coor. Noe B. Nolasco
Sports Editor Jose V. Ortiz
Entertainment Editor Francisco D. Tantoco Jr.
Senior Desk Editor Jose V. Dominguez Jr.
Editorial Consultant Ricardo Saludo
Chief Photographer Raul G. Sarmiento
Book Design Editor Joseph A. Valdez
Board of Trustees Maria R. Pedro
President Raymundo Pedro Romualdez
Executive Vice President Rosario Pedro
Senior Vice President for Sales and Marketing Ramon R. Ramos
Office Administrator Elsa P. Alafta
Office Circulation Elena P. Lamoroza
Business Advisers James Kelley Tan
All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, distributed or transmitted in any form or by any means without prior written permission from the publisher.

Imaginary shortage?

HOW DO YOU SOLVE A PROBLEM LIKE THE BRAIN drain in the Philippine health care system?

You don't, say some Arroyo administration officials, for the simple reason that there is no such problem. And if there appears to be one, it only stands to solve people's misplaced fears. Which was essentially what Labor Secretary Patricia Sto. Tomas said when confronted with

EDITORIAL

warnings of a developing health crisis and an impending collapse of the health care system.

"The crisis in human medical resources is now upon us," Josué Bloom, secretary general of the Alliance of Health Workers, told a recent summit of health-care professionals. "The delivery of health services is losing momentum." Former Health Secretary Jaime Galvez Tan said the country is "facing a serious problem and we need to address it now before it is too late."

Sto. Tomas, however, dismissed such fears as baseless. She told reporters Tuesday, "Many of us see that we are suffering from a brain drain, but it's just a perception. [It's] not supported by hard data." She pointed out that the number of nursing students has been increasing every year. "We should not worry," she said. "Those who leave will be replenished by new graduates."

Stories abound of doctors going back to school to take up nursing so they can find employment in some foreign countries. A 50-something lung surgeon, with 25 years of practice behind him, told Agence France Presse that more than a third of the 49 graduates of their school in 1980 have emigrated, with most of them finding employment as nurses. A 25-year-old obstetrician said more than half of the 300 doctors with whom she graduated in 1986 were now working abroad, mostly as nurses.

But such stories seem to leave Sto. Tomas unconvinced that there is a problem. She must likely puts them in the category of anecdotal evidence. Will hard facts help convince her?

Between 2001 and 2004, according to the UP National Institute for Health, around 3,000 doctors left the country to work as nurses abroad. About the same number of doctors are currently undergoing nursing training to take the same career path. Gelene Tan, who has been studying the same phenomenon, says 3,500 doctors have left as nurses since 2000, and 4,000 more are enrolled in nursing.

The World Health Organization puts the ideal doctor-to-patient ratio at one per 10,000 people. In the Philippines, there is one doctor for every 20,000, according to the best estimates.

The Philippine Overseas Employment Administration says a total of 97,372 nurses left the country from 2001 to 2004. However, Gabriel Tan gives a higher estimate of 100,000 nurses leaving since 1994, half of them during the last five years. And even as 50,000 nurses found jobs abroad since 2001, Philippine nursing schools turned out only 35,276 graduates. Right there is a gap of almost 17,000 between the number of new nurses and those who have emigrated.

If Sto. Tomas cannot see a problem in the appalling doctor-to-patient ratio or fueling the number of emigrants outpacing nursing school graduates, maybe she should consider what these have wrought upon our hospital system. In the last five years, 1,000 private hospitals have closed, according to Dr. Antonio Ocampo, president of the Private Hospital Associates of the Philippines. That brought down the number of private hospitals operating in the country to only 700. The reason? Mainly, the lack of doctors and nurses caused by the exodus to foreign lands of Filipino health professionals.

Now what did Sto. Tomas say about "involuntary migration"? She said that because "many of our overseas workers are leaving the country only temporarily" But to closely to see the case with our health workers. When they leave, many of them don't look back. Otherwise there wouldn't be such a severe shortage in the country's phalanx of health professionals now. Or is there no such shortage, as Sto. Tomas insists?

Sto. Tomas doesn't see a problem, notwithstanding all the evidence, simply because she refuses to open her eyes. All she wants is to count are the dollars that overseas workers send back home and not the costs of losing our country's best and brightest. The economy depends on those remittances for survival and, as far as she is concerned, it matters little if Filipinos die for lack of medical care.

Stoking the forest brawl

A NEW UNITED NATIONS REPORT ON GLOBAL deforestation will make the hackles rise. Secretary-General Environment Secretary Michael Defensor engaged with his bagua order, which allowed the tenure of tenure to the country's largest and supposed tree farmer in Samar.

"The world's forests are still losing ground and it is alarming rate," the Food and Agriculture Organization will reveal the coming January in its "Global Forest Resources Assessment 2005." Here are the highlights of the FAO report, from those. That's the bad news.

The good news is overall, deforestation is inching back ever so slowly. Two first, time-hopeful signs are new plantings and natural forest regrowth.

The FAO study is published every five years. This latest one covers 126 countries. More than half of today's forests—of 4 billion hectares—is concentrated within Russia, Brazil, Canada, United States and China.

Jess, Asia Pulp Bank's San Jose Tuding Corp., meanwhile, has published ads disparaging all the protests of Catholic bishops and some pagan-sounding Defensor's order.

"APBC's bank owned on the environment is clean," the ad says. Legitimate accountable mistake, but harvesting is "much better than the campaign, the ads continue, "guerrilla type of illegal logging non-tampane. This logging fantasy have been discredited by many scientific studies.

Bengkulu in 1977 by then-municipal boss Indosat Mentri Soeh. ASIA has a valid license, the ad says, and it "did not apply to any forest areas that the Securities and Exchange Commission revoked (STC), certificate of registration on May 26, 2003, the "noncompliance with SEC reportorial requirements."

The UN agency found that an average 7.3 million hectares were lopped annually over the last five years—down from 8.9 million hectares yearly between 1990 and 2000—mainly by deforestation in Asia and Africa. Indeed, said Lucio Pedro Willis, coordinator of FAO's study. There cropped the land from reported using since 1972.

"Forest area is increasing in several given-country to regenerate," the late National Scientist Dio-

nes Ilenda wrote shortly before his death. "The sun and debris are most certain parts by some's despairing hand, once the hand of man is no longer lifted against her."

So here the nature's hands have stayed? Forest cover have closed at 97 percent. In 1990, it is now down to 31 percent—and still shifting. There's disagreement whether the salary breakmark is 30 percent. Or is it 70 percent? But all sources we've long been backdrop on readers.

One group proposes replanting a million hectares by 2020. But, in Luhut vindicating, no sovereign alone, the Bankers percentile says. "It is not my doubt more than [ten] good intentions, either." Assessing administrative efforts from 1990 to 1995, this Environment Secretary Angel Alcala said performance left no room.

"Replanting is not the only way to regrow forests," many international forester Pat Baggett. "In fact, protection of forests after logging is more crucial. Often, thousands of naturally growing seedlings and saplings are destroyed by logging and if not protected, these big trees are logged off, they'll mature into more or mature forest cover. The number of trees needed depends on how carefully the logging area is replanted."

The Philippines have companies here not and removed over logging permission? Most of them abandoned forest after private logs were removed—of September and report 2000 2004—to check up on them. That's why Jessy DTC and others have under.

Power came in Asia and Europe grew the new FAO report will say that don't look at us. Between 1990 and 2000, Europe, China, India and New Zealand expanded forest areas by

ONE THE JOKE IS ATTRIBUTED TO THE Marx, though I have love for Chi-town country-pun most credit for the bit. The Marxist under a selling gold earrings, line one of his customers dwindle to woo the fashionably to the product. The words don't sell, he complained, and also the gold stone is down. Tailored, the trader explains, "He already your stamps is clear."

Sen. The Senate Senator ng Filipino has also apologized to GMA for stealing a P1-billion fund meant for some. In case of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, who appears on a Chavit Singson gag. The RP Senator is across the public the bill is not fake, it is valid legal stamps. In fact, the RP stamped the public so such to go to—a bill that states that another is a fake is the country. It should be a collector's item, the RP proposed.

The apology is called for. The RP Senator for speaking up to GMA, it should be apologizing to the public. The glaring mistake in that bill is not forged, it is "Presidente." The "Senate" is not country, since the bill set with the title. Jess, how big money mob is for name. The RP is such to collector's item in the case will than the Mint of Jesus in Japan is a real museum, a museum so lofty that it is a model of the display for which this country can sink. A country that likes to tolerate authentic fakes.

Well, one thing in GMA's favor is not corrupt by stealing. Only by stupidity.

Worse, Asia Pulp Bank's logging company, the Asia Pulp Bank Corp., has chosen to stop but not to operate in a corporation. The SEC revoked APBC's certificate of registration a couple of years ago for failure to comply with requirements. It has not filed its reinstatement. Quite apart from this, Defensor, who was also across as deep island that Bangke is determined to despoil many forests under Chinese and Indonesian, say there's a reason big bus executing the entire forests found.

Worse, as Pat Bank and Mike Defensor Defensor, who issued an order to depose allowing Bangke to break it to its year logging ban in forests.

Copyright © 2005 Philippine Daily Inquirer, Inc. All rights reserved.

SEA Games sked should be published

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

IT'S TIME FORMER ELECTION CHAIRMAN BEN Abalos and the commission review the issue. As a precaution for hiring me inquire, try to do something that the voters vote—best votes—and not just the party, or the women who constitute the Presidential Management Assistant be placed. This demand to only but it's the benefits system we reserve this presentation, thus it would give rise to perceptions that the committee doesn't want to vote on the matter with Comelec Chairman—and her husband wants to show that more opposition leaders, not just the senator standing this GMA, actually called him during the campaign and after the elections. All of these months, we've been in power three years. Among his others was a "persistent" little opposition candidate (who actively believed to be in her Loren Legarda or Sandra Cam).

The chair of Metro Manila have been spruced up for the 23rd SEA Games which opened on Nov. 30 and ends on Dec. 11. The multi-colored lights and huge white flowers—not gown along Roxas Boulevard may be a bit too garish for my liking, as my husband says, but the lights along Roxas Boulevard is such an improvement.

Many drivers want to cheer for team Philippines, but because the games will be held in separate venues—the Metro Manila Development Authority and some of the lessons, we might be forced to keep track of all of the events. It might be a good idea if the organizers could publish the schedule (date, time and place) of all the sports events in the newspapers. As of this post, we can clip them for easy reference. Metro Manilans can follow the various events not just here but also in San Juan, Subic, Pampanga and Clark Freeport.

* * *

As this column reaching printed, the House of Representatives were scheduled to vote on a controversial resolution authorizing Congress to convene as a constituent assembly for the purpose of tackling amendments to the Constitution. House leaders, however, are saying that the votes are overwhelmingly. But the question is, what kept press now? There has to be a counterpart resolution introduced from the Senate to pass it to effect, but to all indications, the senators, fighting for vindication of their chamber, would not consider doing one. The purpose of Senate inquiries, however, should not deter the House. It should tackle one obstacle at a time and ultimately bring it before the people. This Saturday, Dr. Jesus Dureza's Alliance's convention in the roundabout meets, says Isabela senate votes recently.

* * *

Armed in my account of how Deputy Speaker Corey Salapuddin overcame the poverty of his youth and rose to become one of the top Manila leaders of the country, I said he studied law at the University of the Philippines. Actually, he studied political science up to third year at Western Mindanao University in Lambuanga City while he was connected with Senator Ali and Baldoni at the Mindanao Islamic College where he was already governor of Basilan. He also declared three years of law in Basilan but dropped out because due to his political duties.

But there's an update to Salapuddin's saying she's redeemed himself. Now the son of a poor Basilan farmer, One of his priority concerns in Congress was to set up a scholarship program for children from the poorest families and so far, he has come up with more than 1,000 scholarships. 15 percent of them to Christians and the rest to Muslims mainly from Basilan's Islam cultu. His former scholars include mayors, provincial board members, councilors, public school teachers and government employees.

* * *

Senator canvassing in business is so tough these days. I always wear a hard a helping hand to expand the economy. Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile, Sen. Jinggoy Estrada, who announced after working for seven years as a basic action in the Middle East and Europe, and our pal Gen. BG Aduca as Makati Vice Mayor in the Business Club. BG Aduca has a new home that's cozier and has a smaller yards, since he's a shopper now. It's located at Cita 3-B of Valenzuela Bldg., 107 Salcedo St., Legaspi Village, Makati, a stone's throw away from the old rabbit. Contact Cecille at 817-6507 and 817-6508.

* * *

In the past two years, Gen BG and Fidel Ramos-Aduca, which was founded by Pt. Fidel Ver, have been working hand in hand. Jim Bs. reports that Gen. Aduca's son, Lt. Col. Jay Aduca, Jr., Adjutant Chief, Fidelan ng Wayne in Gaisano Children's, in various aspects of the hospital business. Fidelan owns three growing women from the poorest families to college. The Aduca family would appreciate their sons having public or own some income from maintaining while serving families. Some years back, President Ramos donated 25 million to Fidelan's son, Jay, for the hospital project. Fidelan is used for training women from ages 15-25 in childhood skills. Over the years, there successful trainees have grown in number, prospering but to open up for Sept. 15 women, and Fidelan, at the ground floor of El Bien Suites, Unit Metropolitan Ave., Makati, with Tel. Nos. 897-0004 and 897-0005.

* * *

▲ Paging my golden jubilarians High School Class '56 of Holy Ghost College. There's a class get-together courtesy of Alvin Dia (Architect extraordinaire, Holiday at 6:00 p.m. at the Gateway Club, Pasay Rd. The 6:30 p.m. Buffet (formerly the time to be.), near Legaspi St., Legaspi Village, Makati City.

▲ Kia Gatbonton-ex alumni Roger Olivares' records his favorite book, "Still Here Tongues." It is now available in the Internet at Amazon.com. Hits his website: www.still.com, or call 1-888-780-5264.

Deadly playgrounds, cold numbers

HUMAN FACE

Ma. Carmen P. Diaz

I HAVE LOOKED INTO THEIR EYES. I HAVE touched some of them; even had my reflection in my imaginary enemy lurking behind the woes. I have talked to camera in them and reported the unfathomable to where pain, they carried the heavy weight on their frail bodies.

I saw them as called child soldiers for the first time in the 1986-to-a called roaming camp in the mountain barrios of Samar. The Red, I also saw a young girl, maybe 12 or 13, carrying a baby.

We both asked other that you soldiers from into the people, but I did come up with strong story. We used the photo of the young boy carrying a long firearm, marching with grenade belts, in the background.

This was many years ago, but the images still burn in my mind. What country burden for these children. I thought I also could say some of the world's children are in the same boat, where a handsome of leaders across my chest for a photograph of myself. But that was for the fun of it. I still have that photo. In the background, barely a man-broken joined them.

Why do I write about this? I no longer see the photographs of minors in a publication, or show them faces on TV, or identify them if they have been in, vulnerable illegal activities or on victims of wars.

I recall those things when reading stories of "Deadly Playgrounds: The Killing of Children" (child Soldiers in the Philippines" published by Phillipides, according to Phillipides, a human rights research group, the book "presents the socio-demographic profile, reasons, circumstances and effects of involvement of children in armed conflict" The "264 child soldiers (CS) interviewed in the study."

Phillipides does not declare that the results and conclusions of the study are representative of the whole population of child soldiers in the Philippines, but the study should be able to give us notion what the world of these children is like.

Phillipides says that the "main finding in the research is the obvious violation of the voluntary nature of [the] children's involvement in armed groups."

Some hardly released entered their ages, the research questioned Phillipides' statement that the children joined the armed conflict without coercion or with freedom. Phillipides' findings: "Children join armed groups for reasons characteristic, but are not limited to poverty, government neglect and apathy to the plight of the poor, ideological beliefs, socio-economic adversity and support for help non-affiliation or family members of the armed group, and pursuit of power to avenge atrocities and abuses."

But even as Phillipides points a blaming finger at the government for its failure in addressing social problems that have given rise to armed groups, it also reminds us that the government is a signatory to the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Comprehensive Agreement on the Respect of Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law.

Phillipides research funded by Bread for the World-Germany, Misereor-Germany, Kindernothilfe and ecumenic approach. It groups with numerous tables, graphs and statistics that harrow the findings and conclusions. This is not for inspirational reading. It is not for bleeding hearts. It sounds like a doctoral dissertation. It also has

cannon Phillipides' statement that no CS is D-1

It hasn't no cold. The children are never given or allowed to tell their story. I thought, when a guy, Manuel Phillipides (who) researchers, who made up a point of personal contact of the 21st? What a world they could have explored. Or did they stick merely to the checklist type survey in an issue?

I have an opinion why for the weight of statistics that, as I said, they hurts me cold. I'd like to see numbers but I'd also like to hear voices. Phillipides did see some children's drawings only for one of their chapter headers.

The Philippines ratified its Step the Use of Child Arms in October 2002 a different. They made at least to child soldiers, they said. "Child enlisted at 18-16. The best one I told was at 18-14. It was an hardened soul and had been with the Communist Party of the Philippines-New People's Army for 2003 with bullets as big as bananas. Upon joining, we were reminded every demonstrate was here given 18-16, 10-14, M-20-16, and when took on an ambush."

Rolen Ilan was "My Day Was at Tall as Me. Child Soldiers in the Philippines" by Phillipides Rights Watch, an interviewed human rights group.

"I left home and joined the armed group because I wanted to run away from my family because it was so bad and mean. There was so much trouble and I hated quarreling. I left home at age 12.

"I started out as a helper, as M-16. I was assisted to our camp, base to fire it, how to dismantle and assemble it. The training included hopping over rocks, crawling, rolling. Then was the most strenuous."

A few years later, Rolen was part of a troop taken shot of a young rebel girl seated among the dead in the jungle, looking bewildered and frightened. A dead rebel lay beside her. It was the aftermath of a bloody encounter.

A soldier shot that photo. It was a thousand words. It stunned me, proved me. I wrote a contemptuous one, and still it haunted me for days.

* * *

Send feedback to mcarpio@philstar.com.ph

Without regrets

THE PLACE IS CROWDED. THERE'S NO TABLE AVAILABLE, but there's no reality problem. You drink your beer and light cigarettes. You look around and try to avoid eye contact—with people in the crowd, but you can't really see more because of the blinding lights.

Lights off. You see nothing, but you can feel the people dancing to the beat, their breathing, their sweat, the smoke from their cigarettes, their perfume.

Lights on. The beat changes second, you see their faces. Some have their eyes closed. Others are dancing very close—so close—to each other, with their arms placed on each other.

You see here for you can't really understand why they look like. They don't look impressed or you mind. It's like a dream about taking first sex or some pornography.

YOUNG BLOOD

Gaeil L. Mendoza

He cannot to know what she young are drinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? Or solutions contributions from the twenty-something and below—do?

You begin rapping your feet, trying to be so acquainted with the dance. You were your hips and your head. You draw your eyes. You scrutinize their every move against. Because you don't want to show. You don't want to show to yourself. You think what scenario of your best to fit in your friend.

You walk on the middle of the dance floor. Your skin suddenly feels an odd loneliness. The same you close your eyes and try to remember how you once lost yourself to the music.

Rewind to three years back. Before the 12-hour job, the monthly bills, the deadlines, the empty relationships you forced yourself to believe were real and all the responsibilities that come with your desire for independence.

Add that energy, the passion, the sensibility, the restlessness, the loud laughter, the simple happiness, the enlisting the friendships and you owe your family, the soul mates you are among the beautiful people you have chosen to spend your waking hours with.

This is the you. The person who can easily say the night he had as I take the request. I turned of passing manner to the song. I daydream. During the past two years of my life, I have really drowned half of so-like reasons.

I've made big decisions and yet I always thought of myself in the moment-not. I was always the carefree one who would live opportunities. Then I did it. I left my home for 22 years and, with only my clothes and little else besides, moved to new career one.

Understandably, I found it easy—just like playing house. But a lot of the roads that have given to the person I chose to be with. The person was already made and polished when we met.

Going through the scene in my head, I admit that I miss that life. I miss going out with my friends anytime I wanted. I miss seeing a movie like as a preview. Or to go out and not to do that. I miss not having that night-time and sometimes the can you eat at the new bistro. I miss my drinking buddies and my friends who are so relaxed and so go-go drink. I would say miss having "designer" coffee (it's all about the brand, even if our "generic" coffee actually tastes better). I miss not having to worry about the electric bill and the budget for pocket.

Before I left my old home, I was living a very comfortable life. We were not rich—just comfortable. And OK, I was spoiled. It was only this year when I realized I had never bought a bag with my own money. Every little thing I wanted was bought by someone. I wouldn't say that, but I wasn't expected to contribute anything to the maintenance of our home. I had all my salary to myself, plus an occasional allowance from mommy. That's how sweet I was.

Two years ago, I wanted to grab life and take a bite of it. This is not about living life more than I can there, though. This is about living life to the fullest. This is not about regret. This is about having zero when it's and having the consequences of your actions. This is not about pointing fingers and blaming yourself or somebody else. This is about realizing that instead of avoiding every time blaming yourself or others, you should be up and thinking about solutions already.

Which is what I did.

* * *

Gaeil L. Mendoza, 24, has a bachelor's degree in psychology and works as publications coordinator of the International Communication Office of La Salle University. Pleasantville.

IN THE NEWS

Tessie Sy

The INQUIRER is a member of the PHILIPPINE PRESS INSTITUTE

The Supremo's end

THE LONG VIEW

Manuel L. Quezon III

ANGELINO MARIO WROTE, "GET TERROR. Bonifacio declared that as head of the foreigners, he did not recognize the validity of the Spanish titles. He had Spanish officials forcibly took possession of their offices and, in high-handedness, he even set forth his own headcount to the detriment of the Manes. Two complaints of robberies were soon after him to answer him. Bonifacio refused. As a result, he was arrested. The wife of his brothers and three of the soldiers were killed. The soldiers were able to take Bonifacio and his other brothers to Mt. Buntis on Ellampay-Bay, and afterwards to Mount Buntis where the men have been executed.

In the inside passage, the documents portraying the trial of Bonifacio has the Supremo dressed in a camisa chino with his shirt in a red sling, but he looked fairly here. He was in chains, looking weary. The charges are directed at the capability of the Army of Malolos.

The real scene must have been far less imposing. The Supremo himself would have been blood-stained, exhausted from his struggle and in shock over the death of his brothers and his wife's agonies. And judging from the behavior of military men during wartime here I would imagine that the people involved in the court martial exhibited postures of supreme cowardice and treachery. Bonifacio's trial was a kangaroo court and worse, even than all 1 Reader of Maximilien Robespierre's trial.

The bloodied Bonifacio either inspires a mix of outrage and pity or contempt depending on a person's point of view. Nevertheless, it is difficult to imagine he would be less dead to imagine the degradation he had to go through at the hands of men who, not so long before, called him as the liberator of his country. Perhaps if pity wouldn't be avoided, for we all know what he went through in his life, and when his loved ones, his steadfastly loyal brothers and, particularly, his wife must have witnessed the ability of ordinary people to turn into monsters the moment power is put in their hands. Think of all the hundreds of men, women and children who died

by the hand of soldiers, and think of their families. You have your chain of inheritance or read about them, and you have something to relate to a real person, as Bonifacio's was.

I suppose, however, that those who have no love for Bonifacio or the Bonifacistas he headed, since their study of Philippines when they imagine Bonifacio's trial. Were the documented members of the Revolutionary National Assembly decided that The Plan de Paz and Pact of Biyak-na-Bato already deserved exile based the imminent danger of being completely annihilated at Bonifacio's orders, they had just executed.

Bonifacio's knees when was coming and tried to claim himself. Should have pulled his sword and succeeded in blowing off his own ear, with collateral damage to the brain of one of his eyeballs popping out. He was found in this grisly condition and taken to the house of Julio Nakpil, a friend of Bonifacio's (who then he was married to someone to be confirmed).

I can imagine those who dislike Bonifacio seeing even his time, manner up this show who lost by the sword deserves to die by the sword—the same sword he brought to the battle of San Juan del Monte.

But Bonifacio was no Robespierre. He was no petty-sadistic egotist obsessed with wiping out his enemies. He was the epitome of what we'll call today the patriotic organizer. He was a man who had accomplished a lot in his short and tragic life and the stories in the Filipino language.

An anniversary for Andrés Bonifacio's execution come: 10. Accounts tell us that Bonifacio died on his knees, weeping, begging for his life. He murmured a thing over and over: home, or words close to it.

Hundreds, if not thousands of his fellow patriots died by the hands of the Spaniards, the Americans, the Japanese, the Huks, the New People's Army, the Philippine Army and the Philippine Constabulary. Some may wish that he be died with the self-control exhibited by Rizal, but Rizal himself seems to be his own time he demonstrated to the utterly and certainly was inspired by the impassive example of Pedro Bonifacio, a soldier to the last.

The circumstances surrounding Bonifacio's death have resulted in much indignation of Emilio Aguinaldo. We should also remember that the day Bonifacio was killed also marks the heroic resistance of Lt. Col. Francisco Makabulos, who, despite the fact that he was outnumbered by Aguinaldo's troops, refused to surrender his command to the rebels and eventually was acquitted by the supreme tribunal of Pedro Paterno, which he had set up.

The circumstances surrounding Bonifacio's death have resulted in much indignation of Emilio Aguinaldo. We should also remember that the day Bonifacio was killed also marks the heroic resistance of Lt. Col. Francisco Makabulos, who, despite the fact that he was outnumbered by Aguinaldo's troops, refused to surrender his command to the rebels and eventually was acquitted by the supreme tribunal of Pedro Paterno, which he had set up.

Aguinaldo was primarily responsible for the establishment of the Philippine Republic, which was the first democratic republic in Asia. Aguinaldo was primarily responsible for the establishment of the Philippine Republic, which was the first democratic republic in Asia.

Truth comes in nice wrappers

LET ME START BY SAYING THAT I totally sympathize and agree with President Macapagal-Arroyo's criticism of our penchant for the negative. No matter how often she repeats, "the public wants winners, the public wants winners," we still cover only "losers who carry no public mandate." There is no excuse for us to banner stories on Manny Salgado and La Salle when we can cover FEL.

In her State of the Nation Address, Ms Arroyo told us the Philippines was divided between winners who were "poised for a take-off" and losers who were a "hindrance to progress." Why do we concentrate on the hindrances? Don't winners also deserve to hear about how well their stocks are doing and how much cheaper their next shopping trip abroad will be because of the strong peso? Ms Arroyo assured us that "the portrait of a nation on the verge of economic takeoff is unmistakable." Doesn't anyone believe her? She is not asking us to lie. She is only asking us not to look under the rocks. Is that so difficult?

What is the point of informing the public that Ms Arroyo incurred more debts than any legitimate president? Why remind people that the EVAT was passed to pay for dollar-denominated loans she incurred in their name? Why suggest a link between the loans and her profligate spending before the elections? Why can't we simply report that she succeeded in devaluing the dollar against the peso? Our role is not "to comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable," that is the role of Jose Maria Sison.

We keep on carping about Hello Garci when we should be hailing Ms Arroyo's million-vote victory margin. We refuse to lend credibility to the arguments of Winnie Monsod and Mike Defensor. Instead, we allow Rene Saguisag to retort, "She won anyway?...The Monsod-Defensor (Mike) doctrine will never do in San Beda—or, OK, in the bar—in that a summa grad who cheated and got 90 percent would not be expelled or punished somehow because sana cheating he would have passed anyway."

We run stories about Ms Arroyo's "mea culpa" when she actually said "tua culpa" and pointed to the system as the one that needs to be changed, not her.

I am afraid we are "becoming part of the national malaise and a hindrance to development rather than an important solution to our problems."

Already, 600 independent-minded civil society women have stopped watching our networks because they are tired of "the coverage of kangaroo courts, lynch mobs and witch hunts (that) assails the peace of mind and the hopes of our people."

I don't want to sound alarmist, but we will lose our monopoly on truth if we don't learn how to package it. Truth, Malacañang would say, comes in nice wrappers.

It's time we stopped behaving like "tattering nabobs of negativism." Let us restate ourselves into pandering puppies of positivism.

—MANUEL BUENCAMINO,
Action for Economic Reforms,
40 Maalalahanin St.,
Central District, Quezon City

Educational system to blame for lack of competent leaders

WHY IS IT THAT FINDING A good leader nowadays is like looking for a pearl? Are we now running out of good leaders?

If there is difficulty today in finding good leaders, it's because of our educational system which focuses on the development of the intellect. Under the system, we are taught that what's most important are the grades and the medals and being No. 1 in class. We are very happy when our child shows great talents and abilities or excels in class. As a result, the heart is being left out, and it is the heart that makes a good leader. Our skewed educational system is the reason why we have a crisis of leadership.

The focus of our educational system must, therefore, be changed. The teaching of values must be given more time because what matters most is the heart.

Our Lord Jesus Christ said, "Seek first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you; and what profits a man to gain the whole world and lose his life in the process?" As what is important is not the present but the hereafter, the next life, the real life. What is essential is not the "what we have" but the "what we are." Regrettably, even if we know that the heart is very important, we do not try to develop our hearts to become virtuous and upright.

The result of the latest survey that says the young generation of today is getting more uncharitable and disrespectful should jolt us into remedial actions. What will happen to our country if such a trend continues? It's high time to review our school curriculum. Religion and values formation should not only be taught in all levels. They should also be given more time.

—FR. RUFINO PEPOYE
CABATINGAN,
St. Rita Parish, Gingoog City

Inept lawmakers

I TEND TO AGREE WITH THELMA Bunson. (PDI, 11/15/05) We go to clinics and hospitals expecting to be treated by doctors and not by quacks or albularyos; we send our children to schools confident that the teachers are properly schooled and well-qualified.

But here we are having lawmakers who do not even have a decent college education. They can't even participate in the debates and interpellations during legislative deliberations.

Incidentally, the movie personalities—especially the Americans—mentioned by Sen. Jinggoy Estrada in his tirades, were running governments, not enacting laws.

Finally, for as long as we continue to elect actors and persons without the necessary qualifications and abilities to enact laws, our spiral down the drain will continue.

We only deserve what we are getting now, a Senate that is stagnant and not up to its mandate, preoccupied with political infighting and jockeying. God help us.

—NIXON PRINCESA,
princesa@un.org

'Twas the call of Class 1955

I AM ALMOST FLATTERED THAT your eminent jurist columnist, Isagani Cruz dedicated a whole column to me again. (PDI, 11/12/05) This was apparently in defense of what he perceived to be my "attacks" against him in a previous letter. I assure him and all Inquirer readers that my letter was intended to set the record straight amid his innuendoes.

He took much time over the request for my attendance at the Ateneo Alumni Homecoming, saying, so unkindly that I was not even a graduate of Class 1955. He added that my attendance would cost the government precious public funds that could instead be squandered elsewhere. (My classmates generously offered to assume this cost since this was the only basis for the opposition of the prosecution panel.)

I am most gratified that my classmates have not turned their back on me and, to this day, still consider me as a member of their class. Unlike Cruz, they set no technicalities, no assumptions, no premises, no presumptions and no preconditions. They continue to believe, unlike Cruz, that I am a member of Class 1955 because "once an Atenean, always an Ateneo."

This spirit is, perhaps, something Cruz cannot or refuses to understand, in the same vein that he has practically prejudged my guilt, even if several witnesses have testified that I do not own the controversial Velarde account, or that the money alluded to in the Erap Muslim Youth Foundation remains intact to this very day.

As had been said before, I was not expelled because of bad grades. I was expelled because I defended a classmate from being bullied, and to this day, I do not regret that decision. Alam ng Class 1955 iyan, kaya hanggang ngayon itinatatag nila akong mabuting kaklase ito (Class 1955 knows this, that's why until now, it considers me its member).

I hope Cruz can do the same and (like his namesake in the same column space, the respected Neal Cruz) take the cudgels for the Filipino people now being bullied by a government whose claims to legitimacy hangs in doubt, and whose misuse of public funds has been the subject of scandal after scandal.

—JOSEPH EJERCITO ESTRADA

Mothers' Day should be in December

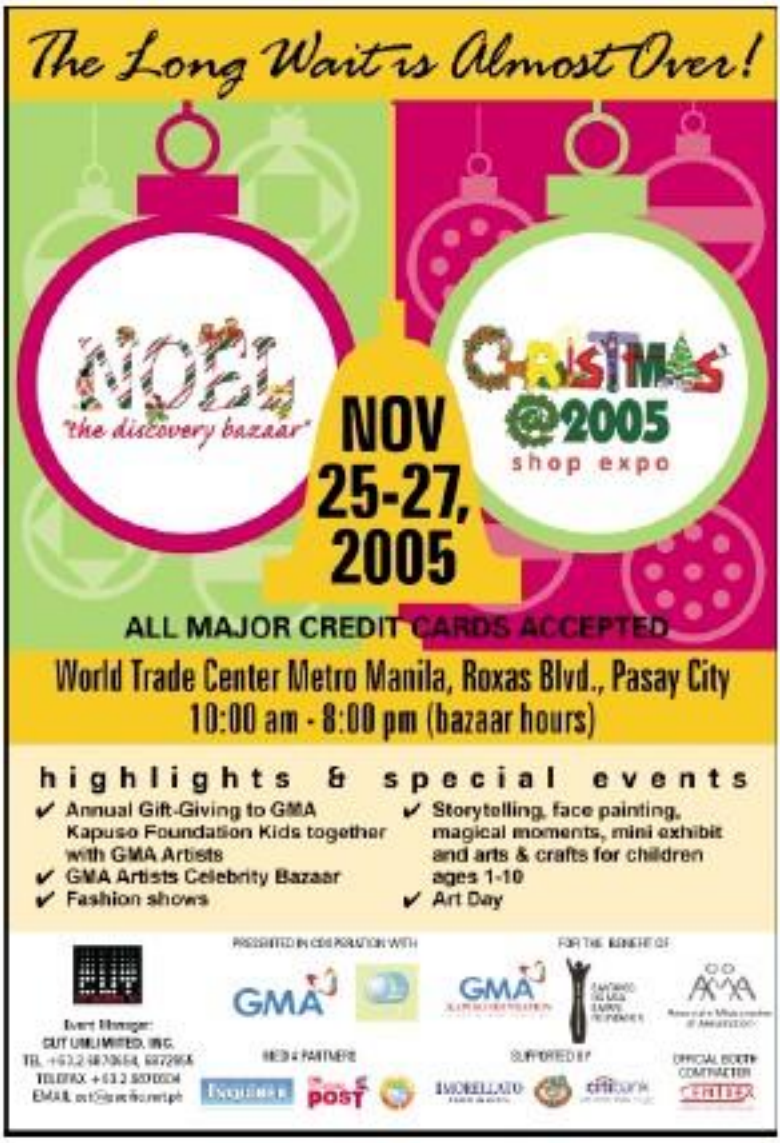
MAY I RESPECTFULLY recommend that the Inquirer promote the celebration of Philippine Mother's Day and Father's Day on Dec. 5, 2005.

It is my observation that the Filipino people still celebrate Mother's Day in May (American practice). Presidential Proclamation No. 58 s-1998 and DepEd Memorandum No. 259, s-2002 have declared the first Monday of December as Mother's Day and Father's Day.

—FRANCISCO T. SAN MIGUEL,
Parañac, Mayhangkal,
Morong, Rizal

If you have any complaints, grievances or suggestions about the treatment of news and photos by the Inquirer, you may write to the Readers' Advocate, Philippine Daily Inquirer, Chino Roces Avenue, corner Tigbe and Mascardo Streets, City of Makati or send a fax to Nos. 897-4792, 897-4794, or e-mail readersadvocate@inquirer.com.ph

Writers of letters to the editor are requested to include their complete address and telephone or pager number or e-mail address for verification purposes. The Inquirer will not publish any letter unless such information is supplied.


The Long Wait is Almost Over!
NOEL
"the discovery bazaar"
CHRISTMAS @2005
shop expo
NOV 25-27, 2005
ALL MAJOR CREDIT CARDS ACCEPTED
World Trade Center Metro Manila, Roxas Blvd., Pasay City
10:00 am - 8:00 pm (bazaar hours)
highlights & special events
✔ Annual Gift-Giving to GMA Kapuso Foundation Kids together with GMA Artists
✔ GMA Artists Celebrity Bazaar
✔ Fashion shows
✔ Storytelling, face painting, magical moments, mini exhibit and arts & crafts for children ages 1-10
✔ Art Day
PRESENTED IN CONJUNCTION WITH
FOR THE BENEFIT OF
GMA
GMA
AMA
Event Manager:
CUT UNLIMITED, INC.
TEL +63 2 687 0654, 687 2955
TELEFAX +63 2 897 0004
EMAIL cut@cut.com.ph
MEDIA PARTNERS
SUPPORTED BY
OFFICIAL BOOTH CONTRACTOR
Inquirer
Philippine Daily Inquirer
Philippine Star
Philippine Daily Inquirer
Philippine Star
Philippine Daily Inquirer
Philippine Star

INQUIRER Southern Luzon
Editor Jun Bombay-el
Bureau Chief Florante G. Solmirano

MEMBERS of the Tanggol Kalikasan, a legal defense corner for the environment, enlist the support of volunteers in the campaign against quarrying in Mt. Banahaw in Quezon.

Wanted: Lawyers for environment

By Dodits T. Mufioz Jr.
Inquirer Cavite

RAUL LAMOSO, A FORMER FOREST GUARD BASED in Barangay Agusan del Sur, Jose Fabrigar, a former police officer in Sibayan, Romblon, Julio Veronza, a government forest ranger assigned to guard the Mt. Isarog Natural Park in Camarines Sur, Rolando Rey Recto, a cousin-color in Bantayan, Quezon.

They come from different areas of the country but share life stories of courage as zealous defenders of Mother Earth's fragile environment. Because of their commitment, they have been hunted, cursed and stalked for liquidation by people behind the rape of nature's wealth in their places.

Their stories were told before participants of a recent three-day Luzon-wide conference on environmental paralegal and law enforcement in a resort hotel in Tagaytay, Quezon.

More than 90 paralegal, community and law enforcers from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources assessed experiences of joy and pain in protecting the environment.

The event was sponsored by Tanggol Kalikasan (Defense of Nature), a public interest environmental legal defense center, and the Foundation for the Philippine Environment. It was co-funded by the Ford Foundation and the Center for International Environmental Law-US Agency for International Development.

The thought of this conference for environmental paralegal and law enforcers became of increasing challenges and problems hauled against them, including cases of harassment, physical violence, detention, murder, strangulation and the like. Perhaps, the case that climaxes in their problems," said environmental lawyer Nel Perez, TK executive director.

Here said some of the problems and issues on environmental protection had already been identified but his group wanted the people directly involved in what they were saying, pains and woes, and the lessons they learned. "We want to validate our findings," he said.

The TK, assisted by a pool of environment lawyers and paralegals, has been operating for 17 years, with offices in strategic parts of the country.

"From the participants begun telling their stories, the whole scenario fell behind.

Behind bars

Japanese spent four and a half years behind bars for strictly enforcing anti-illegal logging laws, which led to the killing of their mayor, Leonardo Gotoy, on Jan. 14, 1998.

That night, unidentified men raided Infanta on the DSWD checkpoint that Japanese and other forest guards were manning. Earlier, the group had seized a truck loaded with illegally-cut logs.

Japanese immediately grabbed an Armalite rifle and fired back at the attackers, not knowing that he had fatally hit the mayor, the truck owner.

He case caught international attention and the man hailed as another icon of environmental protection, favorite nominee groups across the globe campaigned for his release from jail.

In September 2003, the Supreme Court reversed the decision of the Sandiganbayan and set Japanese free.

Fabrigar used to be with the Sibuyan, Romblon police force, with a rank of Senior Police Officer 3.

"When I arrived in Sibuyan, the first thing I noticed was the impressive thick forest of Mt. Guiting-Guiting. I swore to myself I would protect it," Fabrigar narrated.

He was disappointed when he learned that local officials and politicians were behind the illegal logging activities in the mountains.

Undaunted by the risk in his safety and profession, he launched a crusade to stop rich-rotten environmental laws.

"Because of mounting harassment against me, I refused to report [for work] and was chastised as an Aeta [abusive military official leave]. I was terminated. But I explained my case, I filed a complaint and I was vindicated," Fabrigar said.

Forest ranger

Veronza is a DENR forest ranger assigned to the Mt. Isarog Natural Park, a vital watershed in Camarines Sur.

The area is the source of drinking water of 11 municipalities and city and irrigates about 67,400 hectares of farmlands, aside from being the habitat of several indigenous flora and fauna species.

But like other mountains, Isarog faces problems of slash-and-burn farming, wildlife hunting, illegal logging and resource hunting.

The perennial bane for the fabled Bataraza's treasure proved to be the major threat to the mountain, and Veronza pointed to a local judge as allegedly behind the activities.

Entrusted with lawsuits by the judges, Veronza landed in the Quezon municipal jail for robbery charges of spurious environmentalism.

For Recto, the young municipal councilor the presence of gold in the area and his advocacy to prevent the damaging effects of mining on the environment forced him to flee in fear.

Recto said he learned that his enemies had been planning to liquidate him.

Shane lamented that the pathetic government attitude toward implementing environmental laws had resulted in serious demoralization among the ranks of state enviros, mental protection enforcers.

"They lose their enthusiasm, they feel helpless and useless. It ruins their credibility. They now have the tendency to be lax in law enforcement," she said.

Some are cruelly dismissed and lose interest in filing or pursuing the case against the violators, knowing that harassment suits, in return, could deny them promotion, loans and retirement benefits—aside from being barred from traveling abroad, Shane said.

Logistics

Japalen, who now works as property custodian at the DENR regional office in Legazpi in Oro City has learned his lesson. He advised the department to have a ready and adequate fund to shoulder the cost of legal protection.

"And to admit government support in this aspect of environmental preservation is amazing," he added.

He lamented that the DENR was not able to assist him in his legal defense. He was granted scholarship to mothers who finished economy for his bail.

"The rest of my legal defense costs—bail money, lawyer's fees, etc.—came from my personal fund," Japalen said.

"My fellow rangers were demoralized with the DENR neglect of my case. I was like a beggar there, asking for every centavo to fund my court battle," he recalled.

The only financial assistance he received from the department, according to Japalen, was a pledge by then Environment Secretary Heherson Alvarez to compensate him P50,000 for every year of his incarceration. He said he received the allotted amount for 2001 and 2002 only.

Japalen also believed that forest rangers must be armed for their protection. "Without a gun, a forest ranger is an easy target for intimidation while performing his duty," he said.

He clarified that he still he used in shooting back at the illegal loggers belonged to an Army soldier who left it in the barracks that landed night.

Few lawyers

Perez said the inputs of the conference were discussed in a meeting of lawyers. "We aim to build a network of reputable trial lawyers to defend environmental defenders who may be threatened or harassed with court cases for doing their duty as environmental law enforcers," he explained.

But TK has a pool of only five lawyers, he said. He estimated that only 20 lawyers were part of the legal network composed mostly of pro bono advocacy to the concern.

"We believe that there are more individual practitioners of environmental lawyering who are not yet part of the network. We should pull them in," Perez said.

The DENR has signed a memorandum of agreement with Ok Pushing-an-based Center for International Environmental Law and the TK for the formation of a pool of lawyers who would serve as legal defenders of government personnel and volunteers who are ordered to legal assistance for enforcing environmental laws.

The project is called "Defending the Defenders Project."

Be LOUD! Be PROUD!

Let the world hear the sound of the Filipino pride.

Support our athletes as they go faster, higher and stronger for the honor of our nation. Witness our Proxy athletes in action as they go head to head with the region's best in the 23rd Southeast Asian Games!

23rd SEA GAMES Philippines 2005

GSIS supports the Philippines' quest for a stronger nation.

Government Service Insurance System

Across the NATION

Evacuation starts in Quezon village

DOLORES, QUEZON—Under a noon sun, Bella Lacera, with her four-month-old daughter Vanessa in her tight embrace, crossed the rusty steel bridge to leave San Mateo Village here yesterday.

The mother and daughter were among 800 families from the villages of San Mateo, Salvacion, Hinagdanan, and Barangay Bungey in this town who fled their homes days Monday for fear of being caught in the crossfire between communist guerrillas and government soldiers.

"The sellers of gas stoves were destroying. I'm afraid that my children might hit my bottle and me," Lacera told the Inquirer.

A tilt was offered Lacera, her mother, daughter, and two other relatives, out of San Mateo, where houses have been deserted. Their other neighbors are scarcely behind.

"This is now no-man's land," said one villager.

Lt. Gen. Pedro Cabuay Jr. head of the Southern Luzon Command (Solcom) based in Camp Rafael Ileto advised supporters not to disappoint Magtre.

"It is still dangerous," he said in a mobile phone interview.

Maj. Jose Bravo, Solcom spokesperson, said the number of evacuees from the villages in Gen. Nakar, Tayabas and Dolores could reach more than 8,000 persons.

Bravo said these animals freely wandered around the empty village of San Mateo, with the exception of Barangay Bungey in Dolores.

The sound of helicopters breaks the village's silence.

A group of soldiers milled on the ground at nearby Dolores Elementary.

"The sound of gunfire is not stop," said Calapina Ubal, one of the evacuees.

Dolores Mayor Rolando Jose also cancelled all classes in public and private schools in the town since Tuesday.

He also suspended government

ONE of the abandoned houses in Barangay San Mateo.

Photo by Nestor Ricardo Corrales Jr. for the Inquirer

Bravo said some of dwellers said could workers are ready to help the evacuees.

"Once the smoke of the bombs has been cleared, we will begin searching for fresh burial ground for dead rebels," he said.

In Barangay Ipasiwalas, Tayug, evacuees started to return home after two days in a refugee center at Ubay municipal hall.

Meet, those to stay only elderly, according to Antonio de Guzman, Ubay Barangay Chairman. Odilia Abad Santos, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Cops say abducted student released

CALAMBA CITY—A FEMALE NURSING student who was reported abducted by self-confessed rapist in San Pablo City last week was released over the weekend after her parents paid ransom, a police official said yesterday.

An intelligence officer of the Calabarzon police, who asked not to be identified, said the student's parents paid the P50,000 ransom demanded by the suspects.

The police official said the family of the victim apparently did not inform the police that they were already negotiating with the kidnappers.

He said the victim was released unhurt at around 3 a.m. on Sunday, two days after she was abducted.

The source said the victim was dropped off by the suspects in Barangay Bucal in Calamba town, near the Southern Luzon Expressway.

"As of now, the victim is still in a state of shock over what happened to her. What she's ready we will be talking to her to encourage information on their whereabouts," the official told the Inquirer. Marlon Ramos, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Warning of clashes drives Sulu evacuation

By Jobo Alquin and Edwin Fernandez
PDI Mindanao Bureau

COTABATO CITY—LOCAL LEADers in Sulu expressed outrage over the military's distribution of flyers that caused panic among residents, forcing some to flee their homes.

Social Welfare Administrator Ruby Imlani, of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, said the number of evacuees has reached nearly 18,000 taken on Air Force plane dropped flyers warning residents of Indanan town, Jolo, and as far as Patikul, Talipao, Panamao Sulu, Parang, Maimbung, Luuk, Pangutaran and Kalingalan.

"Evacuees among residents of Indanan town who refused to return when fighting gradually stopped, except for two days only, dwindles in Indanan (town)," said Imlani, who condemned the random distribution of flyers by the military.

"The English version was not alarming but the Tausug translation was what caused panic among the villagers," she said.

The flyers bore pictures of military hardware and apparent military offensive in the offing. "Implement residents," especially with the subsequent warning "To our locals, avoid soldiers and, if possible, stay at building," she said.

Sulu Gov. Benjamin Loong said the flyers that caused fears in a divisive act of "organized terrorism," because no one done without consulting us of its content and the intent that the Armed Forces would wish to put across "harmful."

Government troopers, mostly Marines, have engaged the Abu Sayyaf and members of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) led by former chair, Nur Misuari, in a gunfight since Nov. 13. The pitched battle and aerial bombings have displaced thousands of civilians in the provinces of Patikul, Talipao, Panamao Sulu and Indanan.

"We were surprised by the military attempt to drop leaflets that, upon reading it's contents, had caused opposition and heightened the already tense situation in Sulu," said Indanan Mayor Sarip Ali.

Ismail said when the fourth-in Command of the Armed Forces in Zamboanga City announced it was not running after the MNLF Misuari group but only targeting the Moro extremist Abu Sayyaf, tension eased a bit.

"Not only his names found above, it has also been unlawfully displaced persons growing in number as they rejected the arm-pointed evacuation centers," Ismail said.

ROUNDUP

Enough rice assured

LUCENA CITY—Although not enough, rice availability is said to be 30 days after typhoon "Pepeng" hit the province on Friday, according to Agriculture Secretary Luis Lorenzo Jr. Office Director Tito Mijal has a total stock of 15,000 bags of rice that is sufficient to feed the 200 evacuees transferred to Lucena City. Mijal also reported that 1,000 bags of rice were distributed to the Red Cross chapter in Quezon province. Other than rice, Mijal said that 40 sacks of corn seeds were distributed to the municipalities of Mauban, Real, Infanta, Gumaca and Lucena City. Mijal also

Subic rape case: Women lawyers vs all-male team

sent or "a sign of good faith."

He said the subpoenas served on Nov. 8 were sufficient to call them in.

Contentions

The hearing took a momentous turn just 10 minutes into the proceedings when the defense asked for more time to file the soldiers' counteraffidavits, given that the complainant's lawyers had filed a supplemental affidavit by witness Ms. Ita Castro.

Citing the rules of court, Asuncion ex-Rodrigo Jr., representing Chief Brian Carpenter, invoked his client's right to reply to new evidence cited in Castro's affidavit.

The other lawyers—Jose Justiniano and Emmanuel Peña Jr. for Albert Lyn and Corey Burtis; Benjamin Formoso for Daniel Smith; and John Colaco for Keith Silkwood and Dominic Duplantis—supported Rodrigo's motion.

But Asuncion argued that the new witness was not under the case.

When the hearing resumed, Rodrigo said: "We are ready to file our counteraffidavits. We're not asking for more time. We are not begging, but we are entitled to it."

Judge Magdangal Magdo III gave the counteraffidavits and another 10 days to reply to the Castro supplemental statement.

Justiniano urged the women's lawyers to "just all (their) cards on the table."

The women's lawyers agreed to a shorter extension.

Toward the end of the hearing, Formoso, Justiniano, Colaco and the lawyers for the other defendants, including the navy, did not.

He set the second and final hearing on Dec. 20.

Material witness

Burtis called Castro a "material witness."

Her colleague, Christine Jacob, said Castro gave "material facts" and "detailed descriptions" of the rape in the new 40-foot widening of Nov. 1 near the Mora Pier in the Subic Bay Freeport.

Castro said she and her seven companions saw three Caucasian-looking men and an African-American behind the container vans when a second van along the road in that area.

It was also where the 1995 Estrada case, in which two US servicemen abducted and raped a 22-year-old Filipina, was decided.

In a motion to recuse, Castro was absent from the hearing because she did not feel well. She was represented by her lawyer, Randy Escalonga.

Only three witnesses—Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority security officer Noel Hado, security guards Gerald Hopez and Tomas Cuspoc Jr. of Neptune Inc and Associates (where the woman and the soldiers had met—attended the hearing. They were not questioned.

Lawyer Jacob, Justiniano said, was "somewhere in Olongapo"—now to confirm reports of her absence. Sorianos Jr. at the hearing.

But neither Sorianos nor his lawyer was present.

Later had sought the restraining order in connection with his request to be dropped as a suspect. He had said he did not fit the description given by the complainant, Sorianos and several witnesses.

Why 42

If being a disciplinary hearing, Johnnie Lee Scott Jr., executive director of Subic Bay Freeport, Pangalo Tarroo of the GMA intelligence and immigration service office, to explain why six names were in the list of suspects.

Escalona said it was Tarroo who had provided him the list of names. Tarroo initially invoked the confidentiality of his source, but said later in the hearing that the names had been obtained from Ben Navidad, a special assistant to SBMA Chair Felicito Salonga.

Tarroo said Navidad had "reliable information" which was relayed in a text message.

Asuncion spoke earlier with but declined to speak further because he had no lawyer by his side.

The defense lawyers noted Tarroo's reliance on a text message, and asked if it was a standard operational procedure at his office to "bullet expressions based on an information not based on a written statement."

Tarroo said driver Sorianos had confirmed the identities of the soldiers when they were presented to him.

He also denied using force on Sorianos to make him say that a "gang rape" had happened. "That's not true," he said.

Sorianos has yet to submit a counteraffidavit recanting his sworn statement.

Protests

Outside the Olongapo Hall of Justice, pro- and anti-American protesters gathered as early as 8 a.m.

At least 100 policemen were sent to secure the area and maintain order, said Senior Supt. Florencio Bonoyles, city police chief.

Some 50 members of the Bayan Alliance of Non-Communist Organizations for Democracy Thereof led by lawyer Elly Pamatong demanded the transfer of the hearing to Guam.

Members of the women's party-list group Gabriela shouted slogans demanding a fair hearing for the women and the junking of the RP-US Visiting Forces Agreement.

About 200 members of the Nacionalista Magdaganap and Bachelor also massed at the Ulo ng Ipis Rotonda in Olongapo.

Shouting "Out Now," members of the militant group Bayan, Kilusang Mayo Uno, Gabriela and Anakpawis marched from the Rizal Triangle to the main gate of the Subic port.

The militant groups took turns in calling for the junking of the VFA, which they said "is built on a one-sided agreement in favor of visiting US military forces."

Pro- anti-comments

"All Filipinos should stand in solidarity with the rape victim, and the US troops must be held accountable under Philippine laws," said Bayan secretary gen-

eral Renato Reyes Jr.

"The Philippines must assert custody of the suspected US troops. Let us not allow the US government to toy with our legal system, no matter how hopeless it may be," he said.

The Pamalu ng Magdaganap said it was "appalled" at how the Philippine government was handling the case.

"In a recess meeting with US President Jojoy W. Bush, President Macapagal-Arroyo chose to practice her social manners rather than demand custody of the US military personnel involved in the case," it said.

Gabriela Rep. Liza Maza said the Philippine government is the way he is whitewash of the case.

"In this point, it has become clear that we cannot rely on the Arroyo government, even in this case of such heinous proportions committed against a Filipina," Maza said.

Sheaning's group burned a Chinese flag to protest what he said was the leftist groups' "prejudgment of the case.

He said the Chinese flag was "the flag of the left-leaning Communist Party," which accused Arroyo's husband, Atty. Jose Miguel Arroyo, of being economic adviser.

Survivor: Soldiers kicked the wounded

Military officials had earlier said the fatalities, including a woman scout ranger, were members of the communist New People's Army. They said the soldiers had hit Lt. Adrian Liad Bonifacio—now responding to a report on the presence of armed men in the area when they were fired upon.

But Union-related groups said that the incident was a "massacre," and that those killed were farmers who were preparing to plant rice on that day.

Margallo, 20, was injured in south at the GCIA, which is hearing allegations that President Macapagal-Arroyo committed fraud and violated human rights, among other charges.

He arrived in a wheelchair at the congress, which held its final session in the William Shaw Theater of the De La Salle University on Taft Avenue, Manila.

Eyewitness account

Recounting the attack, Margallo, 40, farmers, four of them women, converged at the barn in the farm of his grandfather, Pedro Margallo, at about 8 p.m. on Nov. 20, in preparation for a cooperative-planting activity.

He said the farmers had brought along three hand tractors and bolos.

This was Margallo's account:

In about dawn of the next day a farmer said there were "strangers" outside the barn. Within minutes there was gunfire, and Margallo's brother-in-law Noel Dilajo was hit in the chest.

The farmers ran for cover. Margallo dropped to the ground behind a tree.

The soldiers, who appeared to be walking toward the barn, detoured to the farmers to some and said fight.

The farmers shouted back that they were civilians, but the soldiers continued firing.

Upon reaching the barn, the soldiers stopped firing and started kicking the wounded and hitting the others with rifle butts.

'Planted guns'

"We were told to lie face down, then they stepped on our bodies," Margallo said.

He said the soldiers searched the barn but found nothing. Later, he said, another soldier entered the barn and emptied a sack that contained a .38 handgun, homemade shotguns, carbines and even an M16 assault rifle.

"They said the guns were ours, but we only had bolos and the three hand tractors," Margallo said.

The military had earlier said that the "encounter" was a "legitimate operation," and that it was a group of fifth guerrillas that had fired at the soldiers first, prompting the latter to strike back.

But Margallo, who is also a barangay kagawad (council member), denied this, saying: "We are not fifth. We are civilians. There was no encounter."

Dispute over land

Margallo said the farms was the subject of a case pending at the Department of Agrarian Reform. He said the farmer-claimants had won the case but that his grandfather had refused to turn over the land to them.

In Leyte, the wife of one of those wounded said the shooting might have been triggered by the dispute over the 14-hectare property.

Lidia Orcida, 46, said she would not "let other women" be killed in the attack.

She said her husband Ronilo, 42, had an enemy "except the person claiming to be the owner of the land."

"My husband is just an ordinary farmer who wants to give his family a decent living," Lidia said, adding:

"I plead with our government to please help us. What happened to my husband has ruined my lives. I don't know where to go. We are helpless. We don't have money for his medical needs."

Ronilo Orcida is confined at the Eastern Visayas Regional Medical Center for bullet wounds in the left cheek and abdomen.

His nephew, Eric Sagal, 18, was among those killed. The others were Bernabe Borre Jr., Julienia Embrosa-Borre, Saul Oba-

jan, Perlito Borre, Gerry Manceras and Alma Bartolino, who was recently promoted.

Still on appeal

Pedro Margallo, 74, said he found it unlikely that he was being linked to the shooting.

"I don't have any contact with (the military)," he said.

He also insisted that he still owned the property, and said the farmers were occupying it even in the absence of any certificate of Land Ownership Awards.

The dispute over the property has been going on since 1998.

The DAR, through its adjudication board, resolved the dispute in favor of the farmers in 2000. But Pedro Margallo filed an appeal at the DAR central office.

"It is still on appeal. There is no finality yet. And I don't know when the central office will issue a decision," Provincial Agrarian Reform Officer Enrique Gonzales said of the case.

Gonzales said his office's regional Pedro Margallo, not as the land owner, but only as a claimant, because the latter was

CHR inquiry

A four-member team from the Commission on Human Rights in Eastern Visayas (CHR-8) has started looking into the shooting.

"There were several lives lost in that incident. That is why we have this investigation that we hope to finish in two weeks," said Elvi Malquisto, CHR-8 chief of the investigation division, who is heading the team.

Malquisto said the team had begun gathering testimonies from survivors and the relatives of those killed.

"Goal for us that those witnesses can cooperate with our investigation. They can really give us accounts on what happened on that day," Malquisto said.

He said the team's findings would be made public.

Taking care of kids starts with taking . . .

sexual deaths as among the three biggest problems confronting Filipino children.

Causes

He listed the causes of maternal death and its following:

• Only 60 percent of deliveries are facilitated by a trained health personnel.

• In rural areas, about 80 percent of deliveries are done outside hospitals or other health facilities. Pregnant women usually remain local "labor."

• Only about 15 percent of pregnant women get injected with two doses of tetanus toxoid while more than 50 percent are found to be iron-deficient.

Pre-natal checkup

To avoid maternal deaths, Alipat said all births should be attended by trained personnel. Pregnant women should get at least "four complete pre-natal checkup visits."

Pregnancies should also be spaced at least three years apart, he said. There are 3,000 babies born every day in the country.

Alipat also listed the ongoing armed conflicts in the country as among the biggest problems of Filipino children. "The chronic armed conflict is like a boomerang which drains the country of its scarce and resources," he said.

In Mindanao, the never-ending conflict has left about 2,000 orphans over the past six years, according to Unicef Philippines Mindanao Office.

The children, mostly below 15, are has becoming easy recruits for armed groups, he said.

"These children are left with no recourse but to join armed groups," Mindanao said at the forum, where he represented the Unicef Philippines in the Philippines. "Children's rights violations continue to persist and protect children's rights.

"If we do not attend to their needs, they will continue to join or even organize their own armed groups," he said.

Mindanao said that in Lanao del Norte alone, at least 600 children lost their fathers or even both their parents in the conflict since 1998, other violences notwithstanding.

Then President Joseph Estrada declared an all-out war against the Moro Islamic Liberation Front in 2000.

Services not reaching victims

But the figure reaching Mindanao-based group represents only part of the grim reality.

"Some kids—their lives. It is considered a blemish in the reputation of a family if a member is killed, but the family has not yet taken revenge," Mindanao said.

The conflict is also restricting access to decent education and basic government services from affected Muslim children. "For some reasons, government services are not really reaching the

real victims," he said.

His younger sister Sharifa, who had set up a non-government organization in Lanao del Norte, appealed to bigger state groups to provide assistance directly to the victims, instead of channeling funds to local government units.

Old rules prevent of financial assistance, even from international organizations, lawyers ending up in the pockets of local officials.

No choice but to fight

Lina Luigo, Council for the Welfare of Children executive director, said she heard some stories from some social welfare workers in war-torn areas that relatives had been unwilling to let the government take care of the orphans.

"Because they have nothing, these children have no choice but to fight because it was taken them before they did," she added.

He said it was also important to educate people in Mindanao and "bring Muslims and Christians together, away from misconceptions.

Health system faces collapse

THE PHILIPPINE HEALTH SYSTEM faces collapse in two years as its doctors and nurses seek better jobs overseas, according to the Alliance of Health Workers.

"This is indeed a serious problem that the government must face and well-trained medical practitioners to leave the country to look for greener pastures abroad at somewhat out of our hands," Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said yesterday.

He was reacting to reports that so many Filipino doctors and nurses were leaving the country to work overseas that some 1,000 private hospitals

across the country had been forced to close since 2000.

Many Filipino doctors re-turn to school to get a degree in nursing, because nurses are in greater demand abroad.

Bunye said in a statement that the government was looking at "options and strategies to encourage our doctors to serve at home," or to make up for the departure by getting more medical school graduates.

He was referring to reports that so many Filipino doctors and nurses were leaving the country to work overseas that some 1,000 private hospitals

tion, issues and prejudice."

He said the ongoing conflict in the south is "taking away from the children their hope and their future."

The forum was attended by nearly a hundred people, including Bishop Deogracias Iñiguez from the Catholic Bishops Con-

ference of the Philippines, Venerable Ning Ao of the International Buddhist Progress Society of Manila, Bishop Gerardo Aytchoo of the National Council of Churches in the Philippines and leaders of other civic and religious groups. (with a report from Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.)

Not only is Garci back, he has written a book

lawmaker from Mindanao said yesterday.

Speaking on Dos Bep, Constantino Jaraula, a friend of Garci-linao's, said the former election commissioner was in Mindanao and was posting the "finishing touches" on a book about the Philippine elections.

"He is back and he is writing a book that is possibly already finished. He's just making the finishing touches," Jaraula said.

"He is going to launch it. I'm sure he's willing to come out and is willing to tell everything," he said.

Jaraula said Garci "very reliable" sources—one a government official and the other a private citizen—claimed to him that the former election commissioner dipped back into the country two weeks ago.

"Contrary to some speculations, he is alive and he is willing to come out. I got that from two very reliable sources, one of whom is an [unimpeachable] source," he said.

Title

Jaraula did not say if Garci's book was coming out with a "tell all" book about the alleged cheating in the May 2004 elections but he said he expected it to be a "best seller."

"The best title would be Philippine Elections and Me," the lawmaker said.

Garcillano had worked in the Commission on Elections (Comelec) since the 1990s. President Macapagal-Arroyo appointed him commissioner in February 2006.

He sparked the worst crisis to confront the President after he was heard in a tape recording talking with her about an alleged conspiracy to rig the poll results.

The House of Representatives is mulling an impeachment complaint against him after he went into hiding and refused to attend the investigation of the so-called "Hello, Garci" tapes.

Jaraula said Garcillano might have used his time while hiding from the authorities to write his opus about Philippine elections.

"That gave him time for himself. In fairness to him, he's a good lawyer and he writes well," he said.

Augment income

Jaraula said Garcillano decided to write the book to augment his income after leaving government service.

"He's now in retirement and how much does a government employee get when he retires? This book will earn him millions," he said.

Jaraula said he learned from his sources that the former election commissioner would come out if his safety were guaranteed and the "Hello, Garci" tapes were played in full.

Garcillano's aide, Grace, earlier said that her husband wanted to implement the "truth" that opposition figures had also made to him during the canvassing of votes.

Confirmation of Garci's voice

Opposition Rep. Rufus Rodriguez (Cagayan de Oro) said that he was amazed by playing the entire tape, adding that Garci's admission that it was her husband's voice on the tape was more significant.

"That is of no moment because the fact that others, including opposition members, called up Garci during the 2004 elections is not a defense. Nay does it absolve Garci from charges of rigging the elections with the President," Rodriguez said.

"However, Garci's wife confirmed that indeed, it was her husband's voice on the tapes. That is more important than the threats of opposing opposition members who called up Garci at that time," he said.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

METRO

Lito Borr C. Dipangal

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 2013

EZ2 22 3

SUERTRES 9 5 6 (3D straight order)

FOUR DIGIT 6 2 4 7

PEGALOTTO 6/45 1 4 5 9 38 41

P33,504,577.20

Text or your feedback:

Wanted: Landscape artist for metropolis

By Tarra V. Quismundo

HOW DOES ONE TURN METRO Manila's drab landscape from gray to green?

The Metropolitan Manila Development Authority is looking to architecture, landscape artists and even professionals for the answer.

The agency is to be the builder of the pioneering 19- P400-million Sta. Monica Corridor project which starts in cubbyhole at 6th T Alabastro road network connectivity and by enticing investors and businesses. The project includes the cleaning of sidewalks, easements, waterways and drainage systems, the expanding of unsightly structures, the installation of traffic facilities and the landscaping of center islands and other public places.

"We are collecting ideas from officers to help us determine what kind of landscaping we can do that will not be costly, and that will be efficient in terms of maintenance," MMDA Technical Manager Robert Bustamante told the business newsmen.

Those who want to help the MMDA can submit their ideas in lieu of fees or to MMDA Chair Bayani Fernando.

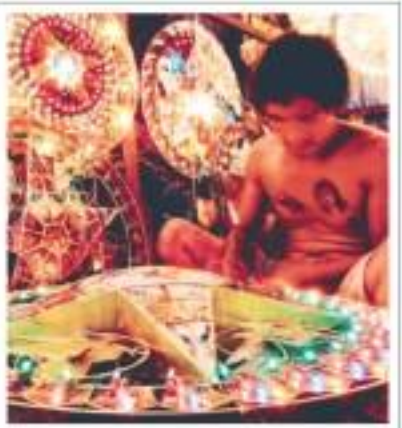
"They must give their ideas soon ... they should submit their proposals hopefully by the last week of December. The Metro is a concrete jungle and we need this to soften up the look of Metro Manila," said Bustamante in a phone interview.

The proposals, he added, should be practical, affordable and sustainable.

"Whatever we are looking at basically is utility. The plan should not be too expensive, maintenance-wise. But still colorful in terms of the kinds of plants they intend to use," he said.

There is no cash prize for the winning proposal but if it comes from a landscaping or architectural firm, the MMDA might hire the company to implement its design.

The agency has long been implementing greening projects along the Metro's thoroughfares, believing that the sight of flowers and shrubs and the easy refuge of buildings, highways and flyovers might give motorists and commuters something to smile about while on the road.



THE COLORS OF CHRISTMAS

A worker puts finishing touches on holiday lanterns and decor for sale along G/F Pejar Arcade, Makati City

'No checkpoint at Pasig operation'

By Luige A. del Puerto

THE POLICE NEVER SET UP A CHECKpoint during its operation that led to an alleged shootout between 26 officers of the Traffic Management Unit and three suspected suspects on Nov. 7 in Pasig City, according to two officers involved in the operation.

In sworn statements, TMU officials had maintained that the suspects' vehicle stopped at a checkpoint when they were flagged down.

In Insp. Ronny Cerdon, head of the mobile team of Task Force Limbas, told an Internal Affairs Service probed (but he and his men), who were on board a marked police vehicle, sailed the suspects' car as it left the parking area of a popular commercial strip on Meralco Avenue around 1:45 p.m.

Earlier, the chief intelligence officer Dr. Insp. Hamad Macmatan, head of another team, had called him up to look for a car with Plate No. QDH- 820 that could be used in the carjacking. Cerdon said he spotted the car in front of the Meralco office in the area.

Macmatan's team was in another car, an unmarked vehicle. Cerdon said he knew little about who were inside the suspects' car, and only had its plate number to work on. All the time he was on board the suspects from Meralco Avenue up to Sarmiento Street, he said could not see who were inside since the windows were heavily tinted.

Cerdon said his team members not told whether or not the suspects were armed. Macmatan's group had received word from an informant that the suspects carried firearms and a grenade. The suspects' car made a U-turn on Meralco Avenue corner Ortigas Avenue, a violation of a traffic rule. Cerdon said he used his flag to draw notice. The second unit then joined. Cerdon said he got out of the marked vehicle and ran to the driver's side of the suspects' car and ordered him to stop.

At this point another car, an unmarked police vehicle manned by Master Sgt. Jessie Belmonte, and three other officers, also chased the suspects' car with the suspects in front of The MCC Gold building on Garnet Street.

Belmonte, the second officer called to testify, corroborated Cerdon's testimony about the sequence of events, leading to the alleged shootout. He said he could see the three suspects sipping coffee during the stakeout. There was a bulge at the waist of one of the suspects, but Belmonte said he wasn't sure whether it was a gun or not. When they cut the suspects' car, Belmonte, who was wounded in the firefight, said the suspect in one of the suspects did not bother to open the windows or duck. Firing from the inside.

The two homicided by Cerdon and Macmatan did not appear to have entered the operation in the dispatch book, a standard procedure according to the panel composed of Sr. Supt. Joselito Casaglo, Benito Ferrillo, and Elvira Tuban. Belmonte and Cerdon said they followed headquarters about the operation.

But a dispatch book provided by Task Force Limbas said the last entry on Nov. 7 was around 6:15 p.m. Panel members quizzed the logbook as strong Macmatan's team was going to conduct surveillance operations on both headquarters around 9:30 p.m., even when the dispatch log said they left early 15 p.m.

Makati bags int'l robotics award

ALTHOUGH THEY DID NOT HIT THE TOP prize, a team of high school seniors from the Philippines won a special award for their entry about a futuristic clothing city populated by robots at an international science fair, beating entries from 32 other countries.

Team MI MAGIDe, from the Makati Science High School, received the Best Presentation Award during the 22nd World Robotics Olympiad held in Bangkok, Thailand from Nov. 4 to 9 for their excellent presentation in an international audience of what their project was about.

"We represented fact count because in terms of teamwork, and for us, that is very important. The other countries in the competition were among the world's richest countries, and at least even just this time, we outranked them, and our project was more convincing than theirs," said Kelly Arena, the team's coach.

The winning team was composed of fourth year students Cyril Landrey Brighid Mendoza and Gloria Angelo Galano.

In the competition, the students were asked to present their vision of the Earth a billion years from now. Their winning entry, titled "World of ROBOTIK," featured a floating city running on electronic currency and populated by robots, all fashioned out from Lego blocks.

"We imagined that the world by that time would have outworn transportation ... all our cars have required and in their setting, robots would be dominant," said Arena, a physics teacher. "The team were given five minutes to explain their projects. And we [happen] to use the good English as that's the edge that are had from the others. They said the world stopped when we explained."

Team MI MAGIDe bested 121 other teams from 13 participating countries, including four from the Philippines and neighboring countries like Hong Kong, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Brunei, Singapore, Taiwan, Korea, China, Japan, Russia and Australia.

Sierra E. Quicnot-Astorga

MetroBriefs

Waterless Christmas

RESIDENTS of 30 barangays in Bagong Barrio, Caloocan City will have to endure another waterless Christmas this year. Carrying empty pails, they trooped early Wednesday to the office of Maynilad Water Services Inc. office in the city to demand that they be given their water allocation on Christmas Day. MWSI technical manager for north Caloocan, said the company is aware of the residents' complaint and is addressing the problem of leaks, increased population and disrupted water supply caused their flow addressing it. Percy C. Cerezo

Cop gets death

A METROBANK guard was gunned down to death by a lone gunman outside the Caloocan City police community precinct in Tala, Caloocan City, on Nov. 7. Senior Inspector Rodel Cruz, 45, was killed by a single gunshot wound to the head. Police said the victim was on duty when he was shot by the gunman, who fled on board a motorcycle driven by another man. Cruz was rushed to the Caloocan City Medical Center where he was declared dead on arrival. Police said they are looking into the possibility that the killing was work-related. Jeannette I. Andrade

New carjack victims

CARJACKERS struck again in Caloocan City the other night, taking away two motorcycle-for-hire drivers and their vehicles and leaving behind a gun. Police said Insp. Jose Ten, 36, and his wife were abducted at 8:30 p.m. Tuesday by two men who forced them to ride on a motorcycle. The couple was released in Barangay Bagumbong, Caloocan City, but the motorcycle was taken. Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

Yule card-making contest for children

THE DARBY SUPPERTIME Center for Movies and Art, in celebration of the Yuletide season, is holding an online card-making contest, "Ang Mga Pamaskong Handog," on Nov. 27. The art is invited to open their entries to children ages 6 to 12, and are asked to use the cut-and-paste technique. The deadline for submissions is Nov. 20. Entries may be sent to Darby Supperstime Center at Suite 3 Building 2, Bonifacio Drive, Port Area, Lot, Barrio Ave., Bgy. Wood Triangle, Tondo, Manila, or

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 1996 PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER B1

BUSINESS

Peso hits 6-month high of 54.30 to $1

MVP named 'Management Man of the Year'

MANUEL V. PANGILINAN, chair of Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. and managing director of the Hong Kong-based First Pacific Co. Ltd., is the "Management Man of the Year 1996" of the Management Association of the Philippines.

The "MAP Management Man of the Year" is a prestigious award that the MAP bestows on individuals in the business community in appreciation for exerting exceptional distinction in the practice of management and for contributing to the country's progress.

The conferment of the award in Pangilinan followed a thorough, stringent selection process that the distinction "MAP Management Man of the Year" has only been conferred 27 times in the 36-year history of the award.

IMAGE BOX

The criteria for the award include strategic leadership and management qualities, contribution to nation building and values formation, effective stewardship within the confines of the highest standard of business and management practice among others.

The MAP said Pangilinan was chosen for engineering the turnaround of PLDT and Philippine Telephone Corp. through a disciplined "customer-driven strategy" consisting of new services in

'Hot money' inflow, OFW remittances lift local currency

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE PESO YESTERDAY CLOSED AT a six-month high of 54.30 against the dollar, boosted by strong dollar inflows into the stock market and remittances from overseas Filipino workers for the Christmas season.

The local currency hit an intra-day high of 54.22 at the Philippine Dealing System before ending back to 54.30, its strongest finish since May 13 when it closed at 54.2014. Volume turnover amounted to $102.2 million.

"With the levels of the 54.30 level, it was the 54 levels (which) dictating direction," said Banco de Oro Universal Bank chief economist Jonathan Ravelas.

The peso gained another 12.50 centavos against the greenback yesterday from Wednesday's closing rate of 54.425 to the dollar.

Ravelas said any pullback could be limited

P40B BELOW CEILING

P140-B budget gap seen

THE GOVERNMENT HAS TIGHTened its budget deficit to only P140 billion by year's end, or P40 billion below its P180-billion ceiling, on improved revenue collection and savings from interest payments, the head of the treasury bureau said yesterday.

In an economic briefing hosted by Sun Life of Canada, National Treasurer Leonor Briones said the lower-than-expected budget deficit this year would allow the government to slash its debts and avoid any borrowings.

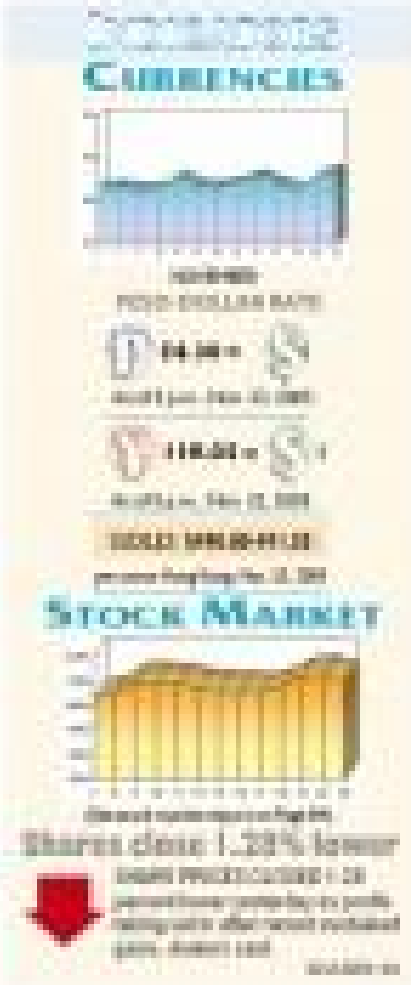
The latest fiscal assessment was even lower than the P154.9-billion deficit projection presented by the Department of Finance (DOF) to Congress in late September.

"Our borrowing requirement has gone low. That's why I've made statements to fund more

WHAT'S INSIDE

Treasury sees better interest rate climate in '98 B2

Masinloc power plant sale facing delay B4



Treasury sees better interest rate climate in '06

Gov't to generate substantial savings from debt servicing

By Michelle V. Rosca

THE BUREAU OF TREASURY EXPECTS the interest rate environment to be even better next year, resulting in possible fat fee generated by generally more savings from debt payments.

In its macroeconomic assumptions for 2006, the government programmed an average 91-day Treasury bill rate of 7.5 percent for the Treasury said annual domestic interest rates could be better than that.

"For 2006, the fiscal target of reducing the budget deficit to P120 billion is really achievable. There is room for interest rates to decline some more and for income savings," National Treasurer Omar Cruz told reporters at the sidelines of the 110th anniversary celebrations of the Treasury yesterday.

Cruz attributed the projected decline in interest rates to the anticipated improvement in the government's fiscal condition, a decline in the government's budget deficit claims positive market reaction, which in turn causes interest rates to go down. A declining deficit shows a government's improving capability to service its obligations and less market borrowings.

The P120-billion deficit ceiling set in the new year coincides the Treasury and the government could realistically avoid follow a programmed deficit of P140 billion for 2006. Tax authorities expect that the deficit for the year would be much lower than the P154-billion ceiling.

Cruz likewise said a better interest rate climate next year would be brought by a decline in oil prices, which would ease inflationary pressure. Low inflation exerts downward pressure on interest rates.

Rafelito Garcia, the Department of Finance lead agency of the Treasury, said the government was able to generate P3.9 billion worth of savings from debt payment because of lower-than-expected interest rates.

The 91-day treasury bill rate, for instance, is hovering within the 6 percent level when the government initially assumed in its debt payment program that it would be an average of 9.1 percent for 2005.

CRUZ

Treasury would announce next week whether or not it would cancel all scheduled auctions for December.

RP expected to end IMF monitoring pact in 2008

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE PHILIPPINES CAN WIPE OUT ITS REmaining debts with the International Monetary Fund by 2008 and finally untap the postprogram monitoring (PPM) arrangement by then, a drafting IMF mission said.

In a press briefing Tuesday night after concluding their two-week consultations without substantive issues, the IMF Mission chief Antoni Gerdrie said "the Philippines' outstanding debts with the IMF had fallen to a record low of $385 million, or about 35 percent of its quota.

Each member country of the IMF is assigned a quota, based broadly on its relative size in the world economy. The quota determines its maximum financial commitment to the IMF and its voting power and has a bearing on its access to IMF financing.

"Technically, the PPM is related to the country's borrowing from the IMF. When the borrowing goes down to zero, that's the absolute end point," Gerdrie said.

If a country's borrowing is higher than its quota with the IMF, it is obliged to stay under the PPM, but the case of the Philippines, its outstanding debts to the Fund have fallen below the country's contribution as a shareholder in the past few years, but it has chosen to keep the PPM in support of its fiscal consolidation.

By 2007, Gerdrie said the country's debts will be to IMF would go down to $311 million.

"There could be one more conversion of one more year but not beyond that," Gerdrie said.

The Philippines has "graduated" from the last lending program with the IMF in 2003 but remained under its close supervision since then. The existing PPM provides for frequent consultations, focusing on policies that favor close up to external stability.

The IMF conducts a review on the Philippines twice a year under the PPM. Under this monitoring scheme, the IMF can offer its advice but no longer impose policy conditions such as

(continued on B3)

Peso hits ...

(continued on B3)

to 55.55. Jones said, but the medium-term trend was toward an appreciation. He said the market would likely seize on the P53.85-to-$1 before targeting for the dollar.

"There's no requirement [via the EO did. Lets] and there are lots of inflows, so the law of supply and demand is pushing the movement one way toward appreciation," said the treasury official of a major local bank.

"There are rules that even John Gokongwei (patriarch of conglomerate JG Summit, which owns Robinsons Land Corp. and Universal Robina Corp.) is hearing press now and that's something the market hasn't heard of for a long time," the banker said.

National Treasurer Omar Cruz said the government's supporting fiscal position had removed a large burden on the bond economy.

"The fiscal equation is a very vital component to the foreign exchange, external, economy account and balance-of-payments outlook," Cruz said in an economic briefing hosted by San Life of Canada.

"We're now at a situation where the fiscal sector was no longer exacerbating the situation," he said.

A strong success from the International Monetary Fund said the government's commitment to implement the expanded value-added tax had lifted market sentiment, resulting in the stock market rallying, sovereign bond spreads tightening, and the peso appreciating.

"Foreign portfolio investment has responded favorable to the positive fiscal news and gross reserves have risen above $24 billion," the minister noted.

"It reminiscences keep coming in and there are more inflows to the stock market. If he exchange rate will hover in the $54 to $55 level," said development bank of the Philippines president Reynaldo David.

MVP named ...

(continued on B3)

consolidation, diversification and expansion.

It also cited his role in substantially enhancing shareholder value as the PLDT shares in both the Philippine Stock Exchange and the New York Stock Exchange were spearheading PLDT's resurgence as one of Asia's most recognized, admired, innovative and best performing telecommunications companies.

The MAP said Bengzon was also instrumental in spearheading investor tours to the Philippines by bringing First Pacific and other foreign investors into the Philippines.

It said the telecom executive was also instrumental in setting up an employee Filipino capable of effective and of kind leadership and of competing with the best in the international business community; for an outstanding career that spans business, academe, church, civic, nongovernment, arts and culture, sports and health organizations, and for leading major companies with strong bias for service, industry, integrity, responsibility, entrepreneurship and philanthropy.

But "MAP Management Men of the Year" awardees included Washington Z. SyCip (1967), Jaime Augusto Zobel de Ayala (1968), Ramon V. del Rosario Sr. (1969), Jose B. Fernandez Jr. (1969), Saul T. Concepcion (1970), Oscar J. Ribadeneira (1970), Alfonso T. Yuchengco (1992), Jose S. Sycip (1994), David M. Consunji and Washington K. Sycip (1996), Gabriel C. Singson (1998), Bobby L. Limcaoco and Henry Sy Jr. (1999), Oscar M. Lopez (2000), Tony Tan Caktiong (2003), Jesse J. Tantoco (2003) and Rafael G. Buenaventura (2004).

P140-B budget ...

(continued on B3)

agree that we won't get hand for... [illegible] ...crease our requirement will be sizable," Cruz said.

"The immediate move must be increase payments and we're not borrowing more," Cruz said.

In the past, he said the government had no choice but to get a high premium for its debts because it was a decimal of cents and was not selling out either local investors.

"If we can do better than the P120-billion [illegible copy] in 2006, our borrowing requirement will go down again," Cruz said.

He said he was in line with the government jobs to wipe out its fiscal deficit by 2008 or even earlier. But the commitment to raise the VAT rate from 10 to 12 percent, he said the government was not in talk with its fiscal consolidation program. — Doris C. Dumlao

Public sector deficit hit ₱74.589B in first 9 mos

By Michelle V. Remo

THE GOVERNMENT RECORDED a cumulative budget deficit of ₱74.589 billion for the first nine months of the year, 33 percent below the ceiling set for the period of ₱104.968 billion.

The DBM reflects this cumulative budget standing of the national government, local governments units and state-owned firms.

Data from the Department of Finance showed that the latest DBM figure was equivalent to 2 percent of the country's gross domestic product (GDP).

The government initially expected the DBM as of September to be equivalent to 3.2 percent of GDP.

The improved fiscal performance of the public sector for the period was attributed to the ability of both the national government and GOCCs to post lesser-than-programmed budget deficits, and the increase in the budget surplus registered by the LGUs and government financial institutions.

"This reflects the continuous effort of the government to further improve the economy through more vigorous revenue mobilization and expenditure management," Finance Secretary Margarito Teves said in a statement.

The national government incurred a budget deficit during the period of ₱196.478 billion, lower than the official ceiling of ₱245.046 billion.

The BSCCs monitored by the DBF posted a combined budget deficit of ₱29.897 billion, compared with the ceiling of ₱46.876 billion.

Contributing to the deficit were the ₱1,2.353 billion allotted by the national government to pay the remaining debts of the old central bank.

On the other hand, the surplus recorded by the LGUs reached ₱20.408 billion, exceeding the target of ₱14.951 billion.

The surplus recorded by GFIs during the period reached ₱4.506 billion compared with the ceiling of ₱4.532 billion.

The following also registered a surplus: Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, ₱9.316 billion; and social security institutions, ₱37.274 billion.

Social security institutions include the Social Security System (SSS), the Government Service Insurance System (GSIS), and Philhealth.

TEVES

WINNERS ALL. Recipients of this year's Citigroup Microentrepreneur of the Year Awards are flanked by representatives from Citigroup, government, private sector and UNDP who took part in the awards ceremony held last month. (BOY)

PCCI urges gov't to explore other revenue sources

By Rossel W. Dorotan

THE COUNTRY'S largest business group yesterday urged the government to look at other sources of revenue aside from the expanded value-added tax as the new law has pushed up the cost of doing business.

Jose S. Alejandro, chair of the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry's econ. subtax committee, said the new VAT law posed several challenges to business in that:

- the version that was passed provided for a 2% percent cap on the input vat credits of firms whose the business sector pushed for full credit;
- the VAT would increase by 2 percentage point to 12 percent starting 2006 next; and,
- the law provided for an increase in the corporate income tax by 5 percentage points to 35 percent.

Alejandro said, however, that the initial effect of the reformed VAT implement may had been beneficial to the business sector as that the price value appreciated, tax collection seemed to improve and there were indications of lowered interest rate.

Alejandro said that a PCCI study of the different business sectors show that most businesses were carrying on with their operations despite increased costs, especially since the GRT was now imposed on electricity and petroleum products.

The No. 1 concern of most companies is the cost of power, followed by labor costs," he said. "After 4 times said that in some cases was the cost of services and transportation."

Businesses expect the national government to explore other sources of revenue other than more VAT," Alejandro said.

He added that the businessmen wanted the government to take steps reducing the cost of business generate by lowering the various expenses from each charges.

MVP calls for new policy on RP telcos

By Clarissa S. Balino

THE PHILIPPINES IS NOT BIG ENOUGH TO host too many players in industries like telecommunications, broadcasting and cable television, according to Manuel V. Pangilinan of the Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co.

"Do you want the elegance of a free market policy where you have 20 players or you want just three or four players that are making money?" he asked reporters after his speech at the 42nd annual meeting of the Philippine Economic Society.

Pangilinan is managing director and chief executive officer of Hong Kong's First Pacific Co. Ltd and chair of Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co., Smart Communications Inc., Philippine Telephone Corp. and Meralco Pacific Corp.

He had objected to the government's policy of deregulation, especially in telecommunications such media where everyone pursues profitability.

Pangilinan called deregulation "the failed sequence of the '90s."

He instead urged the government to dump its free market policy in favor of a new and "profitable" competition framework that worked well in regulated and managed economies like Hong Kong and Malaysia.

"Instead of free and open competition, an enlightened competition policy may be more appropriate for franchised industries where market size is dependent on mass market spending, where capital requirements are large, extensive and continuing, and where there isn't space for too many players if you want them to be profitable," Pangilinan added in his speech.

ATI revises upgrade plan

THE PHILIPPINE PORTS AUTHORITY HAS approved the revision in the plans of Asian Terminals Inc. to upgrade the South Harbor.

"The PPA board had approved the revision in the master plan for the South Harbor as no completion made in the original plan had changed," said Raul Santos, assistant to the PPA general manager in a statement.

PPA general manager Oscar Inviña earlier said ATI had asked the maritime regulators allow it to cut by more than half its original investment plan of ₱300 million for South Harbor.

Inviña said the new master plan submitted by ATI would involve only about ₱100 million in investments.

It includes improvements in Pier 2 as well as the construction of a new building on the lot currently occupied by the PPA.

The $500 million investment were committed by ATI when it signed the contract with the PPA seven ago.

Of the $119 million that ATI was supposed to invest now, Inviña said about $6 million had been delivered.

Inviña said the company had promised to invest some more by 2006 if the volume of business within South Harbor improves.

Santos said the board had not discussed the extension of ATI's contract by another 25 years.

ATI's competitor, International Container Terminal Services Inc. had secured a 25-year extension of its contract at the Port of Manila from the PPA.

Clarissa S. Balino

DBP to issue peso, dollar debt instruments to raise P15B

Taking advantage of improving investor appetite

By Doris C. Dumlao

STATE-OWNED DEVELOPMENT Bank of the Philippines plans to raise more than P15 billion through a combined tier 2 and hybrid tier 1 capital offering in the domestic market, taking advantage of an improving investor appetite.

In a press briefing yesterday, DBP president Reynaldo David said the bank was now seeking the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas' nod for the issuance of P10 billion worth of subordinated debt as well as for tier 1 capital by December, which would put up the bank's capital adequacy ratio from 21 percent to about 30-to-

[illegible] percent of risk assets.

Whether the proposed P15 billion in fresh tier 2 capital would be raised through a single or multiple offering will depend on the market's appetite, DBP consultant Jaime Pangandoyon added.

The fund-raising activity will be followed by the issuance of another P200 million in hybrid tier 1 capital, as soon as the BSP approves the guidelines governing the issuance of these new instruments.

Hybrid capital is a debt instrument that has maturity longer than that of tier 2 capital. It is regarded as a form of tier 1 capital, but its use is likely to be limited by the BSP to 15 percent of total capital.

The DBP's planned tier 2 offering is likely to carry a floating rate structure while the hybrid capital will mature in 20 years. Both instruments will be made locally although the proposed hybrid capital will be denominated in US dollars.

Boosted by the impressive rate of the value-added tax law, the market's appetite for Philippine debts significantly improved this month.

The planned capital hike is meant to prepare the bank for implementation of international accounting standards and Basel 2 risk-weighted capital adequacy rules. The bank's unimpaired capital now stood at P21 billion.

For the first 10 months of the year, DBP reaped P2.77 billion in net profits or 75.32 percent better than year-ago level. It surpassed the 1H percent of the bank's target for the period.

"Our good financial standing gives us better leverage to effectively and efficiently pursue our thrusts and programs. We expect to help the government attain its developmental agenda for the country," David said.

The banks loan portfolio increased by 23.7% percent to P1.08 billion from a year ago, while past due ratio stands to 7.31 percent of loans versus 10.81 percent last year.

Masinloc power plant sale facing delay

By Abigail L. Ho

SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA—DESPITE the government's optimism, the completion of the sale of the 600-megawatt Masinloc coal-fired power plant may be delayed as the buyer, Malaysia's ranks, a step back to examine the political situation before releasing more cash for the asset.

Key Malaysian spokespeople for Filipino-Australian Consortium YNN Pacific Consortium Inc., and the Australian government still remaining in next week in the light of recent political developments in the Philippines.

He said Great Pacific Financial Group of Australia had expressed concern over issues such as the latest lapse, the threat of the establishment of a junta and the possibility of an anti-government takeover of public utilities.

As the Masinloc plant cost a great deal of money with YNN Pacific's winning bid placed at $363.7 million, he said the Australian firm was hard to take several political events into consideration.

He was quick to add, however, that Great Pacific was not backing out of the deal.

"They're really divided to see the sale completed. They're just concerned about the current political situation. We really need to fix the (political) environment," he said in a telephone interview yesterday.

In a dinner encounter here, Great Pacific chair Alfred Wong confirmed that the Australian firm was still in the Masinloc deal, though analysts said that it had already backed out.

"We're still the investor," he said.

Malaysian said another concern was the Australian firm had sent the shareholders of the plant, in light of the unstable political environment.

Also, he said the company wanted to see how the wholesale electricity spot market (WESM) would go, once operationalized.

The electricity futures is due for commercial operation in January next year.

In view of these concerns, Malaysian said it was highly unlikely that the scheduled Dec. 2 deal closure would be met.

"There are still a lot of requirements that we need to comply with. But also latest was more reservers. We're hoping to set a meeting with the Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp. (—as we can discuss our issues with them. Dec. 2 is really not feasible," he said.

The Masinloc deal should be closed 270 days after the issuance of the notice of award to the winning bidder or on Dec. 2.

EXPANDING SUBIC LOCATOR
Makoto Kuroda (left), Nidec Subic Philippines Corp. president, gives Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority Chair Feliciano G. Salonga (right) a briefing on Nidec products and its expansion plans. NBS is a former Id's top manufacturer of small precision motors, and currently maintains its large spin market share in the world for spindle motors.

Sale of URC shares seen to yield P3.9B

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

TO FINANCE THE EXPANSION OF ITS BEVERAGE business, Universal Robina Corp. (URC) of Tanjay John Gokongwei Jr. is raising $72 million (roughly P3.9 billion) through the proposed sale of 365 million shares to international and local investors in January 2006.

URC will use the bulk of the proceeds from the sale to pick up the production of its C2 bottled green tea.

URC president Lance Y. Gokongwei said the company was planning to build one beverage plant overseas and six local production lines. It costs between $10 million and $12 million to build one beverage production plant, Gokongwei estimated.

He declined to reveal where in Asia URC will build its C2 plant.

Gokongwei said that aside from the new shares to be issued, the JG Summit Group was also considering selling shares of URC and other subsidiaries.

"We will take the opportunity provided by this offering to raise additional funds for the continuing expansion of URC's manufacturing assets to strengthen its first mover advantage in an emerging beverage category. We also believe we can achieve, through this offering, a market capitalization that will be attractive for many global institutional investors," Gokongwei said.

Gokongwei said URC would also use the proceeds from the sale to expand its sugar-milling and refining capacity in Negros province to support the expansion of its beverage business.

URC will also spend roughly $25 million to expand the capacity of its candies and snacks production plant in Rizal province.

URC also has manufacturing plants in Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia and China. It maintains commercial offices in Singapore and Hong Kong.

"We believe in the inherent value of our listed subsidiaries, the biggest and strongest of which is URC. Due to its limited free float and shareholder base, the market is currently not valuing URC shares properly. We believe that the free float should be increased with an independently valued offering, one keyed to a broader base of international and local institutional investors," Gokongwei said.

URC has tapped ABS Investment Bank as the underwriter for the issue.

In a special stockholders' meeting last Tuesday, URC approved an increase in its authorized capital stock to P5 billion from P2 billion, of which 365 million will be issued as new shares to international institutional investors and domestic qualified institutional investors at a price tied to within plus or minus 10% of the prevailing market price of the common shares.

JG Summit Holdings and URC are reviewing the sale of some shares in property affiliate Robinsons Land Corp. (RLC).

JG Summit's cement-mixing affiliate Initial operations that the Gokongwei-led firm is bowing up more than P10 billion to expand Singapore office developer United Industrial Corp. (UIC), an analyst from a local brokerage firm said.

The Gokongwei Group needs roughly P51 billion to buy 75 percent of UIC or S$1.09 a share.

RP expected ...

Viewpoint B2

those on monetary aggregates and public sector borrowings as done in previous programs.

After raising the PPM, the country's tariff required to remain free of the BSP to hold countervalues since a year. Prior to the PPM, the Philippines has had 20 different financing programs with the IMF, with the money usually running out to stabilize the balance of payments position.

After contributions held from May 10 to 25, the ruling BSP session from Washington headed by Rodolfo Tabola lauded the "significant" progress on economic reforms made since the Macapagal-Arroyo administration secured a fresh mandate in 2004.

"The first phase of the expanded value-added tax was implemented Nov. 1 and the session welcomes the clear commitment made to raising the VAT rate on Feb. 1 next year," the session said.

The IMF welcomed reforms in the electricity and finance sectors, including the increase in average generation rates and rules at banks now performing assets under the Special Purpose Vehicle Economics Act.

The Fund also upgraded its growth forecast for the Philippines to 5 percent for this year and next year, from earlier forecasts of 4.7 percent and 4.8 percent, respectively.

Shares close ...

Viewpoint B2

Investors are expected to continue consolidating their gains ahead of a long weekend, they added.

The Philippine Stock Exchange composite index shed 27.18 points or 2.10% to 1,266.91 and trading turnover 2,046.81 and 2,130.93. Volume was 342.68 billion shares worth P13.58 billion.

The broader All-share index fell 14.52 points to 1,272.68. Decliners outnumbered advancers, 98 to 48.

Losers beat gainers 88 to 31, with 47 stocks unchanged.

"The market is undergoing a technical correction after encountering resistance at the 1,310-level," said Jonathan Ravelo of Banco de Oro Universal Bank.

"It is now time for investors to cash in gains. As a strategy they also prefer to lighten up their load ahead of the three-day weekend," Ravelo said. Monday is a national holiday.

Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. led the decliners, falling P95 to P1,740.

Ayala Corp. was down P7.50 at P340 while its unit, Globe Telecom retreated P1 to P780 and Ayala Land slid 20 centavos to P9.60.

Jose Miguel Cojuangco Jr.-led SM continues to P64 while its heavy were down a peso or P66.50.

AFP

CHEESE-Y entertaining /C2

LIFESTYLE

MONDAY ARTS & BOOKS • TUESDAY FITNESS • WEDNESDAY IBU • THURSDAY FOOD • FRIDAY FASHION & BEAUTY

A fish by any other name...

Maggie Aglibut

COULD YOU PLEASE EDUCATE ME ON THE Tagalog and English names of fish? I like following and reading recipes but I don't know how to buy the fish in the markets because like tambakol, I don't know the English name nor do I know the Tagalog. I heard you and many person in you and Kitchen Rescue.

MRS. VASQUEZ

I know what you mean! You go to a fantastic Sunday in Farmers and, with utmost confidence, look stunningly bright in the eye and say: "*gusto ko ng kilo ng sawsaw* (gas as sang kilo sa *sa ng tulingin tal. Sanlay*)." Then he gives you that look of total disbelief, like you were some character straight out of Manuel Conde's Wild, Wild World Movie fans. After all, he doesn't know you just wanted kalaw and dalagang bukid!

Officially, those days are over! Here's your list. I asked Aqua Thomas Inverdi, Chinping Tiaoc-Y Fish-Food Corp., to help me out here because no one knows best!

Aside to the source for all your fish and shellfish needs, from tilapia and pampus to Chilean sea bass, seven cobbler and lobsters, down to soft shell crabs and freshest squid ink. If you have large requirements for anything and everything fish/ marine, call 5248886 or e-mail info@foodchainfoods-group.com.

Tagalog-English list

Alumahan—Long jawed Mackerel

Apahap—A sea bass locally grown, also called bulgan in Negros, Barramundi in Australia

Asohos—Whiting

Balakbak—Are brown, reddish variety w/ sweet lips, related to snapper but less smaller mouth

Bengas—Milkfish

Bisugo—Threadfin bream

Bolitao—Emperor, related to snapper or white snapper, commonly sold w/ mayo sauce

Bpet—Crab

Bluе swimmer or royal blue marlin—Invasive fish, though in many places in the Philippines, people still pass off any "billfish" as blue marlin. The best of the billfishes is the sword fish.

Chabita or Sapsia—Mackerel

Dalagang bukid—Yellow-tail Caesio

Dalagak—Rabbit fish with white eyes

Dapit—Local name for both the lapisan fish fillet and the tongue sole

Dilis—Anchovy

Dumalo or balsugo— Male seals or dolphin fish. See dolphin/not dolphin/fish

Espada—Scabbard

Galunggong—Many different types galunggong locho—horse-eyed mackerel, galunggong kabio—round scad or cunnibalus herrow in Japan is mirrow

Chuo-hasa—Bacon boiled mackerel

Inihaw lawin—Phinja fish

Japanchi—Blue-lined

Kitabol—Sabalo catfish

Labahita— Tanguinlike or sanwow fish

Lapu-lapu—Should be a grouper but many times what in Bfad Sea is, people pass off many different types of fish as grouper or lapu-lapu e.g. payong (pikachu) or sweet lips as lubotes

Lo-si gendaw—Oilfish or escolar. There are two types: the smooth-skinned and the rough-skinned. Rough skin has a higher oil content. For both fish, the recommended serving portion is only 6 oz or about 170 g, otherwise, there is tendency to develop the runs. Sometimes this fish is loudly described as the 'brown cobbler'

Lorin—Picnic fish (brightly colored fish with black/brownish)

Malabagat—Black or white snoke

Maming—Wrasse

Maming bulan—Parrot-eyed scad

Matan-bok—Goldfish

Mayo mayo—Snapper, normally L. rubescens is the red snapper but, in the Philippines, they also call the deflation-red call white snapper mayo mayo taken in law is a an emperor or herbs pressed off as a white "red snapper."

Pagi—Mullet or silling toy

Pakia—Eel

Pampano—Pompfret either silver or black

Pla-pla—Big shapia, bigger than 1 kg a piece

Salay-salay—Smooth-tailed trevally

Sarmorol—Also a rabbit fish but with orange lines and a usually bigger

Sapsap—Pony fish

Tabakbak—Trevally

Tambakol—Skipjack tuna

Tanduay—Archerfish

Tanguingue, sangli, sangi—Spanish mackerel, sometimes in the US also called a kingfish. There are two different types: The more common one has stripes on its belly and a rounded head. Another similar fish but bigger is called the wahoo.

Tawilis—Herring, but grown in freshwater in the Philippines it is only found in Taal Lake.

English with no local equivalent

• Haddock, perch, tilefish—no local equivalent

• Pollock—no local—fish usually caught in Atlantic and North Pacific by US and Russian vessels frozen onboard, sold to markets or sent to China and Thailand for reprocessing into fillets or blocks.

• Tilefish—no local—a Black Cod or what the Japanese call gindara. There is a fish-level, locally called gindara which is actually an oil fish due to its high oil content. It is a great fish and looks like cobbler fish. Because of its high oil content, can cause diarrhea, recommended portion size is 6 ounces or 170 grams.

• Croaker—no local though there's what we've called it in the Fish Book.

• Rosefish/ redfish/ Atlantic—all referred to as ocean perch in the fish books. We have an Indian Ocean colored skin/ and in sugar salt

• Flounder—almost a dila and tanigue

More fish facts and the finish on eggs, next week!

E-mail the author at maggie@inquirer.com.ph

MANY Philippine fish varieties have corresponding English names.

Hosting a party has never been this fun or this tasteful

FRIED breaded Camembert is a novelty on the cheese platter, and it's easy on the wallet.

THE CHEESE platter ignites chemistry and good conversation among guests.

THE WIDE variety of cheeses from New Zealand's Mainland Cheese.

A cheese platter must be a combination of different textures, tastes, sights and smells. Recommended cheeses go first, a creamy Havarti, crumbly Brie, to a sharp Asiago, medium and hard cheeses like Gouda and Edam, or blue or white mold cheeses such as Camembert and Brie. Add to that a wide array of cheeses, add bread, crackers, nuts, fruit, olives, veggie sticks and, for some flavor, pâtés, pickled onions and olives. The sophisticated before-and-after dessert experience, when complemented with fine wine, is a true showstopper on its own.

"The Art of Entertaining" guide contains more of Lucy's cheese platter ideas, as well as creative tips for get-togethers at home, valentine fun or small, valuable information on cheeses and recipes for yummy appetizers or filling main courses—all no-baking chores, of course.

Mainland Cheese offers a variety of table cheeses for the everyday cheese connoisseur, for any conceivable use. Neophytes can start off with Mild's delicate buttery flavor, and the typical conscious will appreciate Light's 35-percent less fat.

Likewise there are table cheeses to suit specific cooking needs. Colby is a rich table cheese that melts best when grated, perfect for spaghetti and lasagna. Edam is a Dutch cheese with a slightly salty taste, ideal for cheese platters and relish.

There is no doubt, however, that refreshing cheeses with more refined textures, flavors and composition are Mainland Cheese's specialty. From the creamy classic Brie and Camembert, Lucy's delicious cheese dishes are the stuffed Brie and fried Camembert. Gruyere (that famous Swiss cheese with "holes"), or New Zealand's own mild and slightly sweet Egmont.

Mainland Cheese is conveniently available in supermarkets all over the metro. They have imported Mainland cheeses in some branches of SM Megamall and SM Makati which feature their Mild Mainland and Brie. Mainland cheeses, along with other specialty cheeses:

The art of entertaining with cheese

By Bebs Formoso
Contributor

IF THERE IS ANYONE WHO HAS gotten the art of entertaining at home down pat, it's Lucy Torres. With the mention of friends and family she and actor Andrew Richard Gomez share, there is never a dull moment, nor such a thing as a small meal, in their household.

"I've even had the cute amazon food order people see. We throw them down and take them out when Richard brings home company," confesses the ever-ready hostess.

But when there is no time to spare, even with ready-made clues in the frozen, Lucy is sworn to her best-kept secret: Cheese.

"It's the funniest, most stylish guest isn't food item that you can prepare in 5 mins," she claims. "I'm not really an expert at cooking but preparing cheese is simple and effortless."

Held out by someone who is taken statistics of Mainland Cheese, which has brought to Manila the authentic flavors of the finest cheeses from all over the world. Made by New Zealand Milk, the leading cheese brand in New Zealand and long-time maker of Anchor Milk products, Mainland Cheese is all-natural and aged to perfection.

LUCY Torres-Gomez teaches how to make a cheese platter.

LUCY shares her home-entertaining secrets in "The Art of Entertaining" guidebook.

Mainland Cheese has launched "The Art of Entertaining," a campaign and guidebook introducing Filipinos to the growing trend of serving cheese as a new and exciting form of home-entertaining.

The best introduction to cheeses is the cheese platter.

According to Gucci, the cheese platter is the best salve of the different food textures to create, and ignites discussion and good conversation among guests.

"The cheese platter is my absolute specialty. It's so creative and I always discover new ways to have fun with it," says Lucy.

Watch Pinoy Power in America's Hottest Dance Challenge!
DANCE
ABC
Philippine Daily INQUIRER
TV GUIDE
Thursday, November 24, 2005
TV SCHEDULES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE
Ang inyong tagapaghatid ng ulat-pangmulat
alas-10 ng gabi na!
Tuwing Huwebes
Ating kabalitaan
Cheri Mercado
INQ INQ TV TV
Dito lang sa ABC

GENTLY slice the top portion off the Brie or Camembert. Set the top aside.

EVENLY remove about 1 tbsp. off the middle of the cheese.

SPREAD the filling evenly. Try not to overstuff or it will be easy to chew.

How to stuff a Brie or a Camembert

STUFFED Camembert

PUT the top of the cheese back on like a sandwich. Wrap in cling wrap and serve after a few hours.

BRIE AND CAMEMBERT ARE THE PERFECT cooking ingredients on a dinner plate. Take it from Lucy Tasker, who stuffed her cheese dish in a "modified" Brie. "I found a way to delight my guests by getting my Brie or Camembert a little more interesting, while doing away as I could with special fillings or dips with every last crumb," she says.

STEP BY STEP

Fillings are for prepared spreads like red pesto, olive paste or truffle or wild mushroom paste. Or you can be creative and surprise your guests by trying out new fillings such as sundried tomatoes and basil. Don't stick bread, crostini or crackers.

What you need:
Medium-sized Brie or Camembert
Filling
Cling wrap
Knife

Southeast Asian buffets

DINING OUT

CHINESE HOME offers Oriental favorites: Orange Chicken, Emperial Tao's, Four Mushrooms Chicken and Mongolian Beef. For every order of any of these Oriental dishes, diners will get free Banana Rolls for dessert. The restaurant is at the G/L of Pancontinental Mall, Reclamation Center, Mabolo City. It's open from 11 a.m. to 12 midnight. Call 8474 OX

Free pizza and cash rewards

Enjoy a chicken blowout

Do-it-yourself corned beef

THE REGGIE ASPIRAS SCHOOL of Culinary Arts is conducting the following classes:

Nov. 25—Make Your Own Corned Beef (all ages)—Whole Corned Beef Brisket or Breakfast Corned Beef Made by You From Scratch, soup ended, side dishes. Each participant brings home a mini dish.

Nov. 26—Giant Tastyin Critic Plays of Cooking Class Grabs...Oven-baked with Garlic and Herbs, Delicious Crab Boil with Vegetables and Dipping Sauces (a must in a pot), Authentic Chili Crabs, Cantonese Steamed Chinese Style with Dipping Sauces, Clay Pot Crabs

Nov. 26—Seafood Bonanza 2005 (all ages)—Fried and Grilled Seafood Platter with Sauces, Linuto Pasta, Seafood Casserole, Scallops with Shrimp Sauce and Buttered Rice, Zambo-an Baluarte con Arroz Especiales

Nov. 30—Mediterranean Dishes (all ages)—Homemade Mini Pan de Sal, Baked Pasta Pizza with Assorted Pesto Choice, Paella Arroz Caldo, Flavor Lasagna with Cavalcanti's Mix, Perfect Siomai with Sauces

For inquiries and reservations, call [illegible]